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Hound & Horn

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ACADEMIC DISCOURSE IN HAVANA
a poem by Wallace Stevens

THE INDIVIDUALISM OF IRVING BABBITT
an essay by Bernard Bandler II

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HISTORIAN AND CRITIC OF LETTERS
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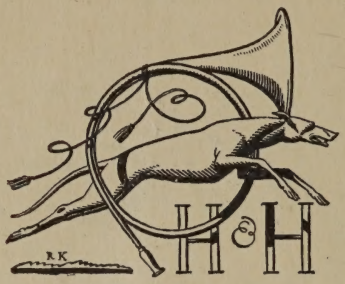

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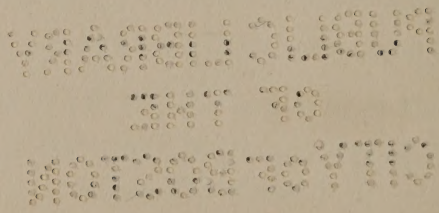

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

S. Foster Damon's new book of poems, *Tilts at the Moon* will be published shortly.

Wallace Stevens is the author of *Harmonium.*

Dale Warren is the Publicity Director of Houghton Mifflin Company. He graduated from Princeton in 1919.

Kenneth Burke was for some time one of the editors of *The Dial.* There is a volume of his short stories called *White Oxen.*

William Carlos Williams is the author of numerous books of verse and prose. He received the Dial Award two years ago.

Norman Foerster is a professor of English at the University of North Carolina, and the author of *American Criticism.* He is editing a collaborative work on Humanism to appear shortly.

THE
HOUND & HORN

Vol. III, No. 1 October-December, 1929

COMMENT

A NOTE ON POLICY

WITH this issue THE HOUND & HORN begins its third year. We hope that a brief statement of policy will make clear what interests and purposes bind together the varied contents of the magazine. The "Harvard Miscellany" has been dropped from the title because it misrepresented our intention. However admirable it is to represent something definite, a university, a political movement, a program for art, we have no real connection with Harvard. The fact that Harvard men have hitherto been the principal contributors and the subjects of many of the articles is largely accidental, a matter of geography and accessibility. The word "Miscellany" is also unfortunate as descriptive of THE HOUND & HORN. If a distinctive attitude, recognizable as common to the group writing for THE HOUND & HORN does not in time become increasingly approved, we have no reason for continued existence.

THE HOUND & HORN is primarily a magazine devoted to the arts and letters; and our main interest is in furthering them. We do not believe that any special dogmas, as humanism, classicism, surrealism, Catholicism, America, will of themselves create art and letters. Criticism has no meaning and no value until a work of art has first justified itself aesthetically, until it is accepted as a work of art. A sound philosophy will not produce a great work of art and a great work of art is no guarantee that the ideas of the artist are sound. Consequently our standard for judging the arts is technical. We demand only that the given work should be well done. We may prefer that the talents which endow any work of art with its initial importance were differently employed. We may feel that certain false ideas mar a work of art and partly defeat the artist's aim. But a picture, a poem, and a story have their intrinsic value quite apart from their association with theory.

The sole unity that we seek in the criticism we print is likewise one of merit, and merit in criticism, as in philosophy, is not simply a matter of being right or wrong. It is not necessary that a man should share our beliefs for us to publish either his critical or creative work. What is important, beyond the minimum of agreement which a common subject yields, is clearness, logical intensity, and awareness of difficulty. Consequently our criticism, both in book reviews and in essays, will not presuppose any platform, nor will it aim directly at establishing a convention and an orthodoxy. What we really ask of our criticism is that it be critical, that it should seize the central point of any subject, and discuss that with all the learning, logic and insight it can command.

The reason for so much criticism in a magazine devoted to the arts and letters is that the artist himself is highly self-conscious and profoundly affected by the intellectual and spiritual currents of the time. Accordingly an analysis of any man who has felt and reflected, whether his field be history, religion, philosophy, criticism, or literature and art themselves, has its place. The intellectual celibacy of the modern learned classes which Professor Whitehead deplores, is particularly true of recent critics. It is our hope to wed critic and artist, and so further coöperation and understanding. Distances in America and the impossibility of frequent conversation seem to render a magazine the ideal medium for the intercourse needed. THE HOUND & HORN is simply an instrument, a means for cohesion: its success depends on the truth or falsity of our faith that artist and critic can work together for their mutual betterment.

THE ODYSSEY IN DUBLIN

"ART has to reveal to us ideas, formless spiritual essences," says A. E. in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.[1] "The supreme question about a work of art is out of how deep a life does it spring."

A. E., otherwise George Russell, seems to be the only member of the Irish school whom Joyce treats with respect; and his words may safely be taken as indicating what Joyce's own theories may be. We are therefore justified in examining Joyce's fat volume as an expression of ideas and as a plumbing of the depths of the soul.

This book is perhaps the most thorough-going literary attempt to analyse the ancient problem of evil since Goethe's *Faust*. Joyce is well aware that he risks comparison with Dante and Milton, among others; he provokes and challenges such comparisons. As one might guess from the title, his book is a deliberate contrast throughout with the *Odyssey*. Moreover, George Russell has stated that it is the *Inferno* of an unfinished trilogy; so Dante is involved. In the text, the father-son problem of *Hamlet* is discussed, and has influenced the plot radically. To the names of Homer, Dante, and Shakspere, we must add that of Blake, for all the modern Irishmen have read him.[2] But as far as I know, neither Milton nor Goethe have influenced the conception of *Ulysses*

[1] *Ulysses* by James Joyce. Published for the Egoist Press, London, by John Rodker, Paris, 1922. Page 177. The type was entirely reset in the eighth printing (May, 1926); page references vary slightly after that date.

[2] Blake is referred to or quoted on pages 24, 33, 34, 37, 177, 178, 190, 197, 373, 377, 554.

(unless Stephen Dedalus be a compound of Satan and Mephistopheles); perhaps their justifications of the ways of God were too Protestant.

Whether or not Homer intended his *Odyssey* to be pure romance, or a symbol of man's wayfaring through the world, no one now can say definitely. Probably Greek criticism started with the allegorizing of Homer;[3] the Stoic grammarian, Crates of Mallos, in Pergamos, established it as a regular method about 150 B. C.;[4] and four centuries later, when the Neoplatonists accepted Ulysses not as a man but Man, Porphyry wrote his celebrated *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, in which he ingeniously conjectured that the return of the hero to his native land was the return of the soul to eternity. But whether or not Porphyry was right, it is impossible today to read the *Odyssey* without discerning a significance that transcends mere story. Sirens and circes and odysseys have even invaded the popular speech, and thence the dictionaries. The parallels which Joyce has drawn are hinted at in his title, and briefly indicated on his manuscript; and from the first, critics have demonstrated that parallels can be traced, step by step, from cover to cover.[5] Parallel-hunting, however, has its dangers: pursued too far and too blindly it becomes a puzzle-game, not an illumination.

Nor does Joyce follow Homer too closely. He changes freely the events themselves and their chronological order.

[3] George Saintsbury: *History of Criticism.* New York (1900). Vol. I, p. 9.

[4] Karl Vossler: *Mediaeval Culture*, trans. Lawton. New York (1929). Vol. I, p. 127.

[5] Valery Larbaud: James Joyce (*La Nouvelle Revue Française*, nouvelle serie, no. 103 [April 1, 1922], pp. 385-409; also *The Criterion*, Vol. I, no. 1 [October, 1922], pp. 94-103). See also Herbert S. Gorman: *James Joyce*, New York, 1924; and Paul Jordan Smith: *A Key to the Ulysses of James Joyce*, Chicago, 1927.

For example, his Ulysses and Telemachus descend together into Hades; there Ulysses encounters Circe, and Telemachus the mother's ghost; whereas in Homer, Telemachus does not descend into Hades, or meet his mother's ghost, and Circe does not dwell there. Joyce simply uses the Homeric characters and incidents for their psychological significance, not for the romantic narrative; they are materials to be used freely as the creator wishes, not a pattern to be copied absolutely.

Sometimes this parallelism is obvious, yet without much meaning. The death and burial of Patrick Dignam correspond in general outlines to the death and burial of Elpenor; and both ghosts appear in Hades. But the parallel ends without casting any particular light on the book; and a birth is put in later, to balance it, without any apparent Homeric source. On the other hand, when we discover that the Irish intellectuals are the Lotus-eaters, while the singers at the Ormond are the Phaeacians (whose life, A. E. states on page 179, is the ideal life), we may trace an implied criticism of those intellectuals, who seek to "creepycrawl after Blake's buttocks into eternity": their art is effete; while Simon Dedalus, singing "When first I saw," from *Martha,* may be vulgar but he is honest. Then we identify Simon with Demodocus,[6] who sang to the Phaeacians about Ulysses, while that hero sat nearby and wept; and even so, Mr. Bloom waxes sentimental over the song that expresses his yearning for his own Martha.

We shall not bother to track down the details of these parallelisms; they might lead us too far astray; we shall only indicate those which help us to understand Joyce's work better.

The influence of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is not so obvious,

[6] This identification is new; I may add to it the theory that Malachi Mulligan, Stephen Dedalus's friend, is Mentor, rather than Mercury, as is generally supposed.

yet I think that it is perfectly demonstrable. In his epic, Dante discovers that he is lost in the forest of Error, and is hindered by various beasts from escaping; then, persuaded by Reason (Virgil), he determines to face the evil that baffles him, and thus find the path to God. In the *Inferno* he beholds the sins of the world, and the worm at its core is Lucifer, man's inhumanity to man. In the *Purgatorio* he discovers the Seven Deadly Sins in himself, and expiates them; at the top of the mountain he has thus climbed he finds the Earthly Paradise. In the *Paradiso*, guided by Faith (Beatrice), he plunges into the mental world,[7] soaring higher and higher until he experiences the mystical ecstasy, which is the climax of existence, the justification of everything, and the vision of God. Thus there are three levels in Dante's scheme of things: the hell of the exterior world, the purgatory of his own consciousness, and the paradise of the supersensuous.

Joyce uses these three levels, and without some recognition of them we cannot understand his book. But he does not treat them as spatially or temporally separate: they are co-existent and interpenetrative. Most of the characters in the book appear to live wholly in the first plane: the hell of this world, where they seem to be very much at home. Those persons, however, whose minds Joyce lays open for us (as Dante laid open his own mind to himself), live in Purgatory. They are constantly suffering for and expiating their sins. Though they do not suspect the existence of a Paradise, a Paradise exists — the ideal within is the very thing that makes them suffer. But its existence shines clear only for a few brief flashes, which we must discuss later.

Shakspere could not give Joyce any solution for the prob-

[7] He passes through Hell and Purgatory in the body, but Paul-like will not say that he entered Paradise in the flesh. (*Paradiso* I, 73-5).

lem of evil, for he had no solution. Evil to him was a fact, a gordian knot that only death could cut. In *Hamlet*, everyone is baffled and overcome: insight, wisdom, power, convention, innocence — all these prove of no avail against the terrible consequences of the secret crime. But the knot itself is of a fascinating intricacy. Stephen Dedalus has his theory: he believes that the ghost of Hamlet's father is Shakspere himself. But like many another commentator, Stephen is beholding his own problems in the Mirror of Nature. For he himself is Hamlet, the dispossessed son — or, in Homeric symbol, Telemachus, the lad in search of a father; and Bloom, the Ulysses of the book, is the father in search of a son.

Ulysses, then, is composed of these three elements: the symbolic narrative of the *Odyssey*, the spiritual planes of the *Divine Comedy*, and the psychological problem of *Hamlet*. Homer furnishes the plot, Dante the setting, and Shakspere the motivation.

But all these things are concentrated into the chance doings of a few people on a particular day in Dublin. Homer, Dante, Milton, and Goethe, had used the entire universe as they knew it for the scene of their poems. Dante indeed compressed his journey into three days: Good Friday in Hell, Holy Saturday in Purgatory, and Easter in Paradise; but Milton included all time as well as all space, for *Paradise Lost* looks back to the proclamation of the Christ in Heaven, and forward to the Last Judgment. Joyce, however, abandons epical vastness for the narrowness of the neo-Aristotelian dramatic Unities. The Time is one day — June 16, 1904; the Place is one city — Dublin; the Plot is a single action — the meeting of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom.

Yet it was Blake, not Aristotle, who made this method possible. Blake enlarged the epical vision until extremes met: the

largest of things were contained in the smallest. Concentrate as hard as possible on the Minute Particulars, and Eternity will appear. A wild flower contains heaven, a grain of sand the world. And this method is Blake's chief contribution to *Ulysses*. Joyce, instead of enlarging his gaze to include everything which the telescope and microscope may reveal, narrows it upon the nearest and commonest things, that he may stare the harder. "To trace the genealogies of these high mortal miseries," Melville had written in *Moby-Dick*,[8] "carries us at last among the sourceless primogenitures of the gods." And "any object, intensely regarded, may be a gate of access to the incorruptible eon of the gods," A. E. told Malachi Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus.[9] So Joyce intensely regards the vulgar, the filthy — all that is most corruptible; *Introibo ad altare Dei* is the first speech in his book.[10]

Plunging into the book, one finds oneself in the full confusion of a city hubbub — a welter of facts, a simmering chaos of clueless allusions. Advertisements, phrases from popular songs, casual obscenities, headlines, boisterious tag-ends of conversations, the sound of bells, bits of church services, quotations from fashion magazines, puns, passages out of popular novels, fragments of *Hamlet*, blasphemies — all these surge and eddy together in a lively jumble. We find ourselves in an unfamiliar city that is busily going about its business, without stopping to explain anything to strangers, who are rather stunned by the uproar.

Just as Stravinsky built *Petroushka* out of hand-organ tunes,

[8] Ch. CVI (World's Classics, p. 552).

[9] P. 396.

[10] These are the first words of the Mass. The Mass symbolizes the Crucifixion. This world is the crucifixion of man. Dante voyages through the Inferno of this world on Good Friday.

accordions, dancing gypsies, and cheap waltzes, so Joyce weaves the texture of his book out of vulgar talk and vulgar literature; and he does this with a gusto which beats Cummings and Sandburg, and indeed has been generally forgotten since the days of Smollett. Yet there is singularly little fun in all the gusto. We overhear smutty jokes, but they are not addressed to us, as audience. An atrabilious, sardonic light lies over the whole city, and gives it something the aspect of a city in a nightmare. Terror, pity, and above all, disgust, assail us on all sides. It seldom occurs to us to laugh.[11]

What particularly depresses us at first is the frankness of the text. Most people manage to scramble through *Ulysses* for the first time by leaping from obscenity to obscenity, like Eliza crossing the ice. One's attention is turned violently upon the very things it normally avoids. We feel as though we were forced, while brushing our teeth, to study the washbowl. But on second reading, all these things fall into their places. Though Dublin, in 1904, evidently did not have a decent system of American plumbing, we know that these disagreeable facts exist; we remember also that anyone who lives in a big city hears daily all these hitherto unprinted words; and now they fall as flatly upon the eye as they did upon the ear.

Dante also recorded obscenities as an essential part of his Inferno (his picture of the world); but his obscenities are fantastic, symbolic, impossible. Joyce's are realistic, vulgar,

[11] It is true that this book has been discussed as a comic masterpiece; for example, by Edmund Wilson, Jr., in his review for *The New Republic*, vol. xxvi, no. 396 (July 5, 1922), and especially by Edwin Muir in his volume, *Transition* (New York, 1926). Mr. Muir, however, qualifies his stand somewhat: "One feels again and again in *Ulysses* that the uproariousness of the farce, the recklessness of the blasphemy, is wildest where the suffering of the artist has been most intense" (p. 22). We are indeed often led towards laughter, but pity or disgust usually dominates our emotion.

indecent. For of such details is a Hell really made. And the inhabitants of his city, like Swedenborg's devils, prefer the filth because they would be vastly uncomfortable clean. Joyce and Dante and Swedenborg (not to mention Callot and the Brueghels), are really at one here: only, Joyce has translated their symbols back into fact.

He is not concerned with indecency for its own sake, but for its value as fact. He is coldly photographic and phonographic. He knows that the facts will prove the ancient belief of Pythagoras and Plato that this world is hell; and his mere recording of them is in itself a tremendous curse upon them.

This world is no stage-Hell with a Miltonic landscape of black flames and brazen gates; it is a very banal, lively, modern city, where men die of drink, where children are born in agony, where love is supplanted by lust, and where religion is reduced to empty ceremony or equally empty blasphemy — the lowest facts of this life in all their stark and hideous vulgarity. The inhabitants of this world are quite at home; they are as exuberant in vitality as Dante's devils, and as coarse and cruel in their sense of humor. A practical joke sends the half-insane Denis Breen rambling in a rage over the city, in spite of his wife's desperate efforts to get him home; and the whole town enjoys and collaborates in the joke. Lord John Corley, out of a job, begs in the streets at night; the woman on Ormond Quay who asked in vain for Bloom's washing reappears in the role of a prostitute. The city is a place of brutality and filth and pettiness; it is the apotheosis of the cheap. Tragedy there is reduced to ignoble farce. We behold no thunder-scarred Monarch ruling this realm of irresponsible imps; we search in vain for Dante's sullen Lucifer or Milton's proud Satan or Goethe's negating Mephistopheles. If there is any such personality, it is rather that mighty Vulgarian who

possessed the soul of Mr. Badman from the first, who strove in vain with Palamabron, and who played like a cat with his predestined victim, Enoch Soames.[12] But it is impossible to find his throne. We are as appalled and as baffled as Los, on a similar journey:

Fearing that Albion should turn his back against the Divine Vision,
Los took his globe of fire to search the interiors of Albion's
Bosom, in all the terrors of friendship entering the caves
Of despair & death to search the tempters out, walking among
Albion's rocks & precipices, caves of solitude & dark despair,
And saw every Minute Particular of Albion degraded & murder'd,
But saw not by whom; they were hidden within in the minute particulars
Of which they had possess'd themselves, and there they take up
The articulations of a man's soul and laughing throw it down
Into the frame, then knock it out upon the plank, & souls are bak'd
In bricks to build the pyramids of Heber & Terah. But Los
Search'd in vain; clos'd from the minutia, he walk'd difficult.
He came down from Highgate thro' Hackney & Holloway towards London
Till he came to old Stratford, & thence to Stepney & the Isle
Of Leutha's Dogs, thence thro' the narrows of the River's side,
And saw every minute particular: the jewels of Albion running down
The kennels of the streets & lanes as if they were abhorr'd:
Every Universal Form was become barren mountains of Moral
Virtue, and every Minute Particular harden'd into grains of sand,
And all their tendernesses of the soul cast forth as filth & mire. . . .

(Blake: *Jerusalem*, 31: 2-21)

But soon we begin to discover clues in the chaos. The whole book is bound tightly together with a vast system of cross-

[12] The references are to Bunyan's *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, Blake's *Milton*, and Beerbohm's *Seven Men*.

references.[13] We are given a puzzle picture to reconstruct; and when we put the fragments together, they fit. An incident is mentioned in one place, expanded in a second, and explained in a third. On page 216, an arm is seen flinging a coin from a window to a one-legged sailor; on page 699, we learn that the arm was Marion Bloom's. Sandwichmen bearing the letters H. E. L. Y'S wind in and out of the action. The viceregal cavalcade rides across the city, and as it receives the salutations of various people, pulls a whole section of the book together. Mr. Bloom has a potato in his pocket on page 55; he feels it there again on page 175; on page 404 he is informed that it is no good as a preventative of rheumatism; on page 414, we learn that it was his poor mama's panacea; two pages later, he makes sure that it is still in his pocket; on the next page, he remembers how it once fell out of his mother's pocket; on page 450, Zoe Higgins takes it from him; twenty pages later, it is hailed as a Preservative against Plague and Pestilence; on page 496, Bloom regrets giving it up; on page 518, he asks Zoe for it back, as a relic of his mother's. And that is but one

[13] The germ of this method may be found in Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*. He obtains his effect of verisimilitude (and incidentally swells his pamphlet to book-size), by all manner of repetitions, delayed and broken anecdotes, and so forth.

But the *Journal* relies for its larger sense of composition solely on the curve of the disease: its rise and fall. It has nothing of the elaborate structure of *Ulysses*. As Ezra Pound pointed out in the *Mercure de France* (June 1, 1922), Joyce has followed the musical structure known as the sonata-form. Stephen's problems constitute the first theme; Bloom's the second; and after a long development section, in which these themes are extended and interwoven, the two themes are wedded in Part III, the recapitulation.

We may also note that the book is built in groups of threes. The first three sections (Part I), state Stephen's problems; the next three state Bloom's. Then the courses of the two begin to interweave; and each third section brings a climax. In the library, Stephen unknowingly declares who he is. At Kiernan's Bloom declares himself also. In night-town, both face their own problems. Part III then brings the two together and separates them, the third section being the epilogue devoted to Mrs. Bloom.

of the things in his pockets! There are literally thousands of such cross-references, that tie the seeming chaos into a perfectly functioning city. Joyce's control of his material is amazing: no one has pointed out as yet a single inconsistency,though his book involves not only contents of pockets and contents of minds, but the detailed pasts of a half dozen people. Some day, a concordance of all these facts should be published.

Fairly soon, we begin to remember these references — some of them, at least; we recognize some of the people when they reappear; we become more familiar with the lay of the streets. And we find out what is happening.

The outward events of Thursday, June 16, 1904, were trivial enough. It was a sunny day, which some people found hot, though there were occasional clouds that covered the sun; and after sunset there was a brief thunder-shower that cooled the city off refreshingly. The newspapers were full of the latest American holocaust — the *General Slocum*, a three-decker excursion boat filled with women and children on a Sunday-school picnic, had burned to the water-line in the East River, New York; deaths were estimated variously from over six hundred to a round thousand. The horrible details quite eclipsed the latest Japanese success in her war against Russia: a big victory at Fuchou, on the railroad seventy miles north of Port Arthur. Of far more concern to Dubliners was the spread of the hoof-and-mouth disease among the Irish cattle, which had caused already the slaughter of many head.

It was Gold Cup day at Ascot, the most fashionable race-course in England — a day still remembered (in the British Isles) because the favorite, the famous mare Sceptre, weakened at the end, and was passed by Throwaway, against whom the odds had been twenty to one. Betting had run high in Dublin; that evening many persons were celebrating or drown-

ing their sorrows. Mrs. Bandmann Palmer played in *Leah* (she had taken the role of Hamlet the night before); the Elster Grimes Opera Co. presented *The Lily of Killarney*. Posters announced other attractions, especially Marie Kendall, soubrette, and Eugene Stratton, black-face comedian. There were still some posters remaining of the Keogh-Bennett boxing-match, which had taken place on May 20; other posters announced that soon Dr. Alexander Dowie, self-styled Elijah, and the founder of Zion City in America, would preach at Merrion Hall on the approaching end of the world. Lord Dudley was to open the Mirus bazaar for funds for Mercer's hospital that afternoon; in the evening there were to be fireworks.

A man had been drowned nine days before at Sandycove; his body had not yet turned up.

Altogether, it was a typical day.

That morning, Stephen Dedalus, aged 22, gave his morning classes at Mr. Deasy's school and received his monthly pay; then took a letter of Mr. Deasy's on the hoof-and-mouth disease to the office of the *Evening Telegram* for publication. After treating the pressmen to some drinks, he went to the library, where he tried to explain his theories of *Hamlet* to George Russell and other literary lights, in hopes of selling an article to *Dana*; here he was joined by Malachi Mulligan, who shared his lodgings at the Martello Tower, and who had been expecting Stephen to turn up and provide drinks for lunch. Later in the day, Stephen wandered over to the Holles Street Maternity Hospital, where Mrs. Mina Purefoy was giving birth to a boy; there Stephen provided drinks for the medical students. Mulligan joined the party; and after more drinking they set out to make a night of it. Tagging along with the party, neither in nor out of it, was one Mr. Bloom.

Leopold Paula ("Poldy") Bloom, aged 38, advertising solicitor for the *Freeman,* had risen that morning and got his wife's breakfast for her in bed. He then went to the post-office for a letter from one Martha Clifford, with whom he was holding a sentimental correspondence under a false name. After having bathed at the public baths, he went to the burial of Patrick Dignam. On his return from the cemetery, he tried to land an advertisement for his paper, and went to the library to look up the original form of the ad. After a delayed lunch, he waited in a bar for Martin Cunningham, and was insulted by an anti-Semitic Nationalist who threw a biscuit-tin after him because Bloom reminded him that Christ was a Jew. He walked on the beach in the dusk, and eyed a young girl there. Then he went to the Holles St. Hospital to enquire after Mrs. Purefoy; there he found a rather noisy party, at which Stephen Dedalus, professor and poet, was getting rather tipsy.

Being invited to take a drink, Mr. Bloom joined them, but contributed little to the conversation. The party left the hospital for Burke's, where there was more drinking; then it broke up. At the railroad station Stephen Dedalus made a scene when Mulligan and an English friend of his, Haines, were trying to slip away; there was a vague, drunken fight of some sort. Then Dedalus and a medical student, Lynch, departed for night-town, Mr. Bloom anxiously following them. He lost sight of them, but found them at Mrs. Bella Cohen's. In the midst of the jollification, Dedalus suddenly turned white, smashed the lamp, and ran out. Bloom, running after him, found him in an argument with two drunken soldiers, one of whom knocked him down. Lynch vanished during the excitement; but Bloom stood by Dedalus, risking the notoriety that might follow the inquiries of the police. When

all was smoothed over, Bloom roused Stephen, took him to a cabman's shelter for some coffee, then suggested that he go home with him and have some cocoa instead. They went, but Stephen refused to spend the night there, and Bloom went to bed; his wife waking, he told her of some Italian lessons he had arranged for Stephen to give her. He also told her that he wanted his breakfast in bed next morning with two fresh eggs.

But though this is about all that the two main characters in the book do, such peregrinations in squalor are only outward and accidental. They tell almost nothing of the real plot. That lies in those thoughts which choke even mental utterance as they emerge in the mind; here Purgatory begins. On this plane — the consciousness and its borderland — we expiate our sins and work out our salvations.

Here Space and Time themselves are affected by the demands of the profounder world. Simultaneousness of action (notably in the section "Wandering Rocks"),[14] demands disintegration of space: sentences from events elsewhere break through the scene before us; the tap of a blind-man's cane punctuates a discourse that is unaware of it; the bell at an auction-room starts a bicycle-race in another part of the city. Time, however, does not disintegrate; instead, it expands and

[14] The sections of *Ulysses* are identifiable as follows: (Part I); section I, Telemachus and Mentor [Stephen and Mulligan]; section 2, Nestor [Mr. Deasy]; section 3, Proteus [Stephen's thoughts on the beach]; (Part II); section 4, Sirens [Bloom as Ulysses tied to the mast]; section 5, Calypso [Martha Clifford]; section 6, Elpenor [funeral of Patrick Dignam]; section 7, Aeolus [newspaper office]; section 8, the Laestrygonians [the lunchers at Burton's]; section 9, the Lotus Eaters [The Intellectuals at the library]; section 10, Wandering Rocks [all Dublin]; section 11, Scylla, Charybdis, and the Phaeacians [the barmaids and the singers at the Ormond]; section 12, Polyphemus [the "Citizen"]; section 13, Nausikaa [Gerty MacDowell]; section 14, Oxen of the Sun [the medical students at the Holles Street Hospital]; section 15, Hades [night-town]; (Part III); section 16, Eumaeus's hut [Skin the Goat's cabman's shelter]; section 17, Ulysses and Telemachus [Bloom and Stephen]; section 18, Penelope [Mrs. Bloom].

contracts like an accordion, especially when its inhabitants have been drinking. Enormous reveries of apotheosis and martyrdom intervene between question and answer; and again, important events take place without being noticed.

In short, Joyce, having recorded a "slice of life" far more detailed than anything Turgenev or Maupassant ever achieved, and having reached the limit of all "realism" whatsoever, bends his gaze upon his subject so intensely that the gates of the mental world swing open. The magical eye pierces the object. Realism is transcended. The veil of matter is rent and drawn aside and the psychological realm — the stage of the true drama — is revealed.

Again we are baffled at the outset by a swirling chaos, not of the objects this time but of language. Words run together; sentences break off in the midst of a syllable; punctuation tends to disappear. Different styles ebb and flow. The birth of a baby involves a series of imitations of the whole history of English prose. Gertie Macdowell's romance is told in the manner of an Ethel M. Dell novel. A scene in a newspaper office is punctuated with headlines. The party at the hospital works up to Rabelais's *Discourse of the Drinkers;* the scene in night-town takes form as a Strindberg dream-play. When Bloom bores Stephen with his banalities in the next scene, all the clichés in English are revivified; and when Stephen's mental exhaustion becomes complete, the result is a whole section in question-and-answer. And finally, Mrs. Bloom's nocturnal reverie flows on absolutely unhampered by punctuation of any sort.

The style smothers the plot. Suppressed emotions are indistinguishable from the trivialities through which they emerge. For example, we learn, well on through the book, that Blazes Boylan is Mrs. Bloom's lover; then, looking back,

we can trace evidences of Mr. Bloom's emotion. Picking them out and putting them together, the first five read as follows:

(P. 59) Two letters and a card lay on the hall floor. He stooped and gathered them. Mrs. Marion Bloom. His quick heart slowed at once. Bold Hand. Mrs. Marion.

(P. 61) —Who was the letter from? he asked.

Bold hand. Marion.

— O, Boylan, she said. He's bringing the programme.

(P. 89) He's coming in the afternoon. Her songs.

Plasto's. Sir Philip Crampton's memorial fountain bust. Who was he?

— How do you do, Martin Cunningham said, raising his palm to his brow in salute.

— He doesn't see us, Mr. Power said. Yes, he does. How do you do.

— Who? Mr. Dedalus asked.

— Blazes Boylan, Mr. Power said. There he is airing his quiff.

Just that moment I was thinking.

Mr. Dedalus bent across to salute. From the door of the Red Bank the white disc of a straw hat flashed reply: passed.

Mr. Bloom reviewed the nails of his left hand, then those of his right hand. The nails. Yes. Is there anything more in him than they she sees. Fascination. Worst man in Dublin. That keeps him alive. They sometimes feel what a person is. Instinct. But a type like that. My nails. I am just looking at them: well pared. . . .

(P. 164) . . .Who is this was telling me, Isn't Blazes Boylan mixed up in it?

A warm shock of air heat of mustard hauched on Mr. Bloom' heart. He raised his eyes and met the stare of a bilious clock. Two. Pub clock five minutes fast. Time going on. Hands moving. Two. Not yet.

His midriff yearned then upward, sank within him, yearned more longingly.

Wine.

He smellsipped the cordial juice and, bidding his throat strongly to speed it, set his wineglass delicately down.

— Yes, he said. He's the organiser in point of fact.

(P. 174) Mr. Bloom came to Kildare street. First I must. Library.

Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turned up trousers. It is. It is.

His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right.

Is it? Almost certain. Won't look. Wine in my face. Why did I? Too heady. Yes, it is. The walk. Not see. Not see. Get on.

Making for the museum gate with long windy strides he lifted his eyes. Handsome building. Sir Thomas Deane designed. Not following me?

Didn't see me perhaps. Light in his eyes.

The flutter of his breath came forth in short sighs. Quick. Cold statues: quiet there. Safe in a minute.

No, didn't see me. After two. Just at the gate.

My heart!

His eyes beating looked steadfastly at cream curves of stone. Sir Thomas Deane was the Greek architecture.

Looked for something.

His hasty hand went quick into a pocket, took out, read unfolded Agendath Netaim. Where did I?

Busy looking for.

He thrust back quickly Agendath.

Afternoon she said.

I am looking for that. Yes, that. Try all pockets. Handker. *Freeman.* Where did I?

Hurry. Walk quietly. Moment more. My heart.

His hand looking for the where did I put found in his hip pocket soap lotion have to call tepid paper stuck. Ah, soap there! Yes. Gate.

Safe!

Boswell was the first, in modern times, to establish that the true hero need not wear nodding tragedy plumes; and that the slightest act of a great man is implicit with his individual greatness. Proust, I believe, worked on some such theory. He concentrates his gaze so intensely upon anything and everything sufficiently trivial—say, a hostess at her tea-table—that

gradually we recognize the Eternal Hostess at an Eternal Tea. She is the Platonic Idea of Hostess-ship; we have been her guest all our lives. It is a trifle terrifying. But Joyce does more. Dimly his solid, four-dimensional figures rear themselves into visualizations of theological concepts — of Good and Evil, of Salvation and Damnation. Meanwhile the plot gets lost in a series of jottings which are impossible to be put together on a first reading, improbable on a second, and unlikely on a third. And when the important events are not described at all, the confusion is still more confounded.

Though Stephen's friendship with Mulligan is one of the main elements of the story, the quarrel which breaks it off is undiscoverable on the page where it should occur (page 406). Those concerned are evidently too drunk to realize what is going on.[15] Another significant episode is also passed over without notice by the chief actor therein: when Bloom gets

[15] As no critic hitherto seems to have mentioned this fight, and as the accounts of it are obscured by slang and decomposed by alcohol, I shall venture to reconstruct it.

At ten minutes past eleven, Mulligan and Stephen are to meet Haines at the Westland Row station (p. 372), where they are to take the train home to Sandycove.

At "Ten to" eleven (p. 404), the party is drinking at Burke's. Near the bottom of p. 405 is heard the warning: "Closing time, gents" and the last round of drinks is ordered (Bloom taking wine—"Rome boose" in Romany—instead of absinthe). At the mention of Bloom's name, Alec Bannon, who came to the party with Mulligan (p. 383), and who has been flirting with the photo-girl, Milly Bloom (pp. 21, 64), suddenly recognizes the father of his inamorata ("Bloo? Cadges ads? Photo's papli, by all that's gorgeous."); immediately he and Mulligan slip away. Stephen misses them at once, and pleads in ludicrous imitation of a begging letter: "Kind Kristyann will yu help, yung man hoose frend tuk bungalo kee to find plais whear to lay crown off his hed 2 night"; for Mulligan has the key to the Martello Tower (p. 22). P. 405 ends with the drinking of the last drink: "Health all. *A la votre!*"

On p. 406 the text gets dizzy, but it is clear that the party remains at Burke's for another paragraph. "Dusty" Rhodes, the man in the mackintosh who attended Dignam's funeral, passes; Bloom bursts into tears at the memories thus revived. There is further talk about the Russo-Japanese war. "Time all. There's

home, he tells his wife that he wants his breakfast in bed, then drops off to sleep. In section 17, which is told from his point of view, the thought never reaches his conscious mind, or expression on paper; but section 18 (her reveries) begins with a reference to it. As Bloom that morning had got Marion's breakfast for her, his change of attitude must have some meaning.

Yet the plot, once unravelled, is simple. It is a study in loneliness. Two carefully contrasted characters (Stephen and Bloom), both desperately unhappy and thoroughly aware of the Hell in which they live, meet at last; but any friendship between them is impossible, because they have nothing in common; and they part again.

Stephen Dedalus, a highly sensitive lad, sustained by a bitter, ingrowing pride, is determined "to discover the mode of life or of art whereby his spirit can express itself with an un-

eleven of them. Get ye gone." indicates the striking of eleven, the closing-hour.

They wander out, chanting Burn's "We're nae the fou"; reciting the test for drunkenness, "The Leith police dismisseth us"; some one is sick; some one is singing "Mona my true love." The fire brigade passes ("Pflaap! Pflaap!" — pp. 406, 413, 469), and all the party but Stephen, Lynch, and Bloom run after it.

Stephen then invites Lynch to go to night-town, and asks "who the sooty hell" is Bloom. Their long legs soon outdistance his flat feet; Bloom pants along after them with a stitch in his side (pp. 413, 429).

It is clear that after the party leaves Burke's at eleven and before the fire-brigade passes (for this incident bridges the intersectional gap) occurs the fight in the Westland Row station (mentioned by Bloom, pp. 429, 575, 576), when Mulligan and Haines, "who eventually euchred their third companion, were patently trying, as if the whole bally station belonged to them, to give Stephen the slip in the confusion." There were evidently blows; at any rate, Stephen hurt his hand somehow (pp. 525, 547, 611); and Bloom later reminds him that "after what occurred at Westland Row station" Mulligan would certainly lock him out of the Tower.

Mulligan and Haines therefore must have caught their train. Bloom also tried to take a train; but he jumped on a train going in the wrong direction (the engine was on the wrong end), and jumped off again (p. 429), in time to overhear Stephen and Lynch making their plans to go to night-town.

fettered freedom."[16] To his ideal he has sacrificed everything: home, church, country.

His father, Simon Dedalus, successively "a medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgather, a bankrupt, and at present a praiser of his own past,"[17] has proved incapable of supporting the survivors of his fifteen children; on this very day, some of the furniture is being sold at auction. Simon and Stephen despise each other; they share no interests or ambitions; and Stephen simply dismisses his father from his head. He had adored his mother, who babied him even to the extent of washing him;[18] but at her deathbed, his stern loss of faith forbade him to kneel down and pray for her soul when she asked, and the terrible scene still haunts him. Consequently, Stephen has left his father's house, and has hired the Martello Tower at Sandycove, his companion there being the blithe Malachi ("Buck") Mulligan.

The Church has also failed him. As a boy, Stephen had heard his father and his aunt, Mrs. Riordan, quarrel over the Parnell-priest tragedy; during his adolescence, certain sermons on Hell had sunk deep; and at the Jesuit College, he had mastered Aquinas and Aristotle so well that he saw the whole world through their eyes. For a moment he was tempted to become a priest. The pride of being "called," the awful powers put into his hands, the vestments, the secret knowledge of the mysteries of the universe — all these nearly made him

[16] James Joyce: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, N. Y., 1916, p. 290.

[17] *Portrait*, p. 284.

[18] *Portrait*, p. 203. She died in June; since October he has been unable to perform his own ablutions: *Ulysses*, pp. 15, 404, 625-6.

say "Yes." Then the realization that he would not be a being apart, but the member of an order; that he would everlastingly be a servant; that he would have lost his freedom forever — these cancelled wholly the proud claims of the church and the mystery and power of the priestly office.

He lost his faith; and no compromise was possible. He must believe everything or nothing; he would tolerate no evasions and equivocations and reinterpretations. Fruitlessly his mother argued with him. He broke away, to Paris, only to be called back to her deathbed, where even her dying request could not force him to give in, though only for a moment. He has become what he calls "a horrible example of free thought."

Even so, his pride and his intelligence cannot wholly conquer his training. His mind still runs on obscure problems of theology in which vaguely he senses reflections of his own obscure problems. He frankly prefers Aquinas to Freud; Aquinas and Aristotle still dominate his brain. Phrases from the Vulgate, echoes of liturgy, return to torture him. He can neither serve nor escape.

He has really conquered the weakness of patriotism, however. As an Irishman, he detests English rule; yet he cannot become a Nationalist. The Parnell tragedy led him to the belief that in the end the Irish always sacrifice their patriots and would-be saviors. Like Pierre Glendinning, he has come to the conclusion that no cause is so great that it deserves the sacrifice of his self. He asks instead what Ireland has ever done for him, that it should expect his service.

The effect of all this pent-up energy should be its release in some mighty book. Stephen is known as a poet, but actually he has produced very little as yet. He likes Yeats's poetry, which he used to sing to his mother; and the quatrain he writes

out on a scrap torn from Mr. Deasy's letter while walking along the beach, is conventionally romantic without being trite, and perfectly controlled without being moving or profound. Yet he has also a strong tendency towards realism. After J. J. O'Molloy's samples of perfect (and empty) oratory, Stephen is moved to utter his "vision," *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine* — a vignette of Dublin life, the simplicity of which appeals at first to the pressmen as "copy," but puzzles them by its lack of point. Thus Stephen is poised between the ultra-romanticism of the early Yeats and the ultra-realism of Joyce himself. He has not found himself yet; and only his determination to do so sustains him through the misery of non-production and non-appreciation; he has allowed himself ten years in which to produce something.

He cannot create; neither can he impart. He is not a good teacher, as he knows and as Mr. Deasy hints; and though in this way only can he make any money, he is too proud to let Mr. Deasy's hint pass unnoticed. He determines to give up his job. He cannot even find intellectual equals to converse with, for none has studied Aquinas so well as he. In the *Portrait of the Artist,* he perplexes his Dean with catholic aesthetics; in *Ulysses,* the Irish intellectuals seem quite unable to follow his theory of *Hamlet.* In fact, he can discourse, but he cannot discuss or converse. Any comment is merely interruption to his already ordered thoughts. His nearest approach to genuine conversation lies in his clever and bitter retorts — his "gloomy jesuit jibes," as Mulligan describes them — which usually cause a change of subject.

Love is closed to him. His religious training had separated love from lust with violence to both. Hypersensitive, he "fell" at the age of sixteen; yet a deep asceticism drives him to punish his body by allowing it only the lowest of women

to mitigate its demands. He argues that such women may injure his body but cannot injure his soul. As yet he is too poor to marry, nor has he any inclination that way. Apparently his dead mother still absorbs all his love; her forbidding ghost rises when in a drunken despair he goes to night-town. It seems as though he suffered from that "avarice of emotions" which Aquinas mentions, and which Stephen introduces into his discourse on *Hamlet* (page 197).

There remains friendship; and his incapacity for friendship is outlined in his relations with Malachi Mulligan. Stephen demands everything from a friend, in return for nothing. The *Portrait* ended with his subtle trial of Cranly, and Cranly's failure; and *Ulysses* opens with Stephen's awareness that Mulligan's fondness is also being weighed and found wanting.

Buck Mulligan is perhaps the pleasantest character in the book. Untroubled by life, and completely irresponsible, he ignores his family's dislike of Stephen, and rooms with him at the Martello Tower. He is genuinely fond of Stephen; he admires him profoundly; he believes that, though Stephen will never be a poet, he will produce something in the given ten years. Confident of that, he is quite willing to pay more than his share towards the informally communal purse.

But he cannot (and indeed will not) satisfy Stephen's inordinate egotism. There are limits which his good nature cannot go beyond; there are blind fidelities which his lightheartedness cannot be bothered with. He will not be monopolized. When Stephen expects an apology for a chance remark overheard and construed into insult, Mulligan does not respond. Moreover, he has invited a somewhat fatuous Englishman, Haines, to share the Tower; Stephen is jealous. Stephen is further humiliated by Mulligan's little ways of extracting small coins out of Stephen's pockets: they hint too

clearly at Stephen's inability to bear his full share of the common expenses. Mulligan thinks nothing of such details. Stephen owes him nine pounds; so he borrows Stephen's last pennies for a drink, excusing himself with the announcement, "He who stealeth from the poor, lendeth to the Lord"; and hearing that Stephen is to be paid that morning, he suggests that Stephen turn up at "The Ship" for lunch and provide drinks.

Stephen can never forgive his creditors; but he has other causes for his ranklings. Mulligan is a wit of such brilliance that he completely disintegrates any intellectual conversation. Where Stephen's discourses move from point to premeditated point, Mulligan's improvisations leap irrepressibly from laugh to laugh. He is diverting in both senses of the word. Consequently Stephen privately classes him with Photius and the brood of clowns and mockers; for Mulligan is forever brushing away Stephen's inmost problems with a soothing joke. Therefore Stephen silently determines that he will not sleep at the Tower another night.

So he does not turn up at "The Ship"; instead he sends a telegram: "The sentimentalist is he who would enjoy without incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done. Dedalus."[19] It is his summing up of Mulligan, and in a way a final test; for if Mulligan can see how it applies, there will be depth enough in him to warrant a continuation of their friendship. Mulligan, however, merely laughs at Stephen's "papal bull"; and undeterred from his designs on Stephen's cash, he turns up at the talk on *Hamlet,* in time to interrupt it and virtually ruin Stephen's chance of selling it. Stephen recognizes him as

[19] He is quoting (without acknowledgement) an aphorism from *The Pilgrim's Scrip* (Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel,* ch. XXIV).

his enemy now, but weakly gives in, and apparently buys the drinks for Mulligan and Haines.

That evening, Stephen is again buying drinks, this time for the medical students at the Holles Street Hospital. Mulligan appears. Mulligan and Haines try to drop him, and there is a scene at Westland Row station. Thus with violence the friendship is broken off; drunken and disgusted, Stephen goes to night-town, in search of a girl he used to know, Georgina Johnson. His only companion is Lynch, a former classmate, now a medical student, who goes with Stephen only because Stephen is paying, and later abandons him when he gets into the row with the soldiers. But Stephen is not to find consolation in lust for the disappointments of friendship.

The cause of Stephen's isolation is one thing — pride. It is his secret and monstrous egotism that attracted him to the priesthood, and then repelled him. Personal pride separates him from his father and his friends, causing him to find insult in the slightest remarks; intellectual pride makes him reject the tenets of his church and refuse to pray for his mother's soul. It is the same egotism in another form that prevents his giving himself either in love or in literature. Family, church, and state represent simply so many bondages to be escaped. He dreams of being free, of flying (like the ancient Dedalus) free of the labyrinth he has constructed and its streets of harlots.

He stands alone, and he does not want to be alone. Kissing goes by favor in this world, and he will not curry favor. The other person must make the first advance, must apologize. He has ruined his soul by striving for its mastery; and he who seeks his own soul shall lose it. Self-excluded from the friendship of men, the love of women, and the expression of himself, none the less he needs intellectually a father, emotionally

a mother, and spiritually a friend. As Telemachus he is seeking such a father — some power or cause before which he can become as a little child, a discipline to which he can devote himself wholly. As Hamlet, he needs a mother, whose understanding love will protect him from the ruder winds of the world. But his search is baffled by the first and deepest of the Seven Deadly Sins: pride. Fundamentally, he is Satan, the Selfhood, warring in vain against the Things that Are, and refusing to strike the banner inscribed *Non Serviam.*[20]

Tagging along on the wild party that night was the despised and comic figure of Mr. Bloom. Nobody particularly noticed him; and when Stephen quarreled with Mulligan and the party broke up, Mr. Bloom was invited neither one way nor the other. But with a loyalty which overcame all fear of rebuff, violence, and scandal, he tracked Stephen into Mrs. Cohen's, took charge of his money, followed him when he ran amok, did his best to get Stephen out of the row with the soldiers, and stood by him when the police arrived. For the timid Mr. Bloom, these acts were supremely courageous.

Leopold Bloom is the complete misfit of all literature. There is something a little askew in him everywhere. Physically he is queer in various ways: for example, he cannot throw a ball like a man, and he never could. His face is pallid; he is flat-footed; his body gives the repulsive effect of being "sinewless and wobbly and all that." He has no head for alcohol; he does not enjoy smoking. Racially he is a mixture, being the son of a Hungarian Jew and an Irish girl.

[20] The identification of Stephen with Satan is made clear by cross-reference. "Theologians consider that Satan's sin was the sin of pride . . . : *non serviam: I will not serve*" (*Portrait*, p. 134); at the dramatic climax of *Ulysses*, when Stephen sees his mother's ghost, he cries out: "With me all or not at all! *Non serviam!*" (*Ulysses*, p. 541). Other places (especially *Portrait*, pp. 281, 291), clinch this identification, which is the ultimate clue to Stephen's entire character. It is clinched further by his contrast with Bloom; of which later.

Moreover, his father had become a protestant, and his mother was a catholic. Leopold was brought up as a protestant, turned catholic to get married, then lost all faith in religion, and sought the brotherhood of man in the ranks of the Masons. Religion has never meant anything to him; Darwin had early turned him against orthodoxy; and the world of science came to dominate his imagination. He is fond of reading popular books on astronomy; once he had set out to square the circle; and he is constantly planning little inventions, which never are realized. Needless to say, Irish-Catholic Dublin is not the ideal place for such a Masonic Jew.

He is a patriot, however, and considers himself a true Irishman. In one of the Parnell rumpuses, he overcame his natural cowardice enough to stand beside the harassed chief; and he remembers with pride how Parnell thanked him when he returned Parnell's hat, which had been knocked off. Nevertheless he can be of little service to the Nationalist cause, because nobody accepts him. He is ignored. People don't know he is in the room. He cannot make and keep a friend; whenever he puts himself forward, he talks too much, and bores people with his scientific commonplaces. His little kindnesses are innumerable but unappreciated. He goes to Dignam's funeral; he helps a blind man across the street; he visits the hospital to inquire about Mrs. Purefoy. He feeds stray dogs and scatters buns for the seagulls.

Bloom never has held a job long; just now he is barely getting along as an advertisement solicitor. His inherited frugality was developed by necessity; and the fact that he never stands drinks increases his unpopularity. Yet he is not really stingy: he subscribes for the support of Paddy Dignam's children, he buys a book for his wife, and he pays for Stephen's coffee and rolls at Skin-the-Goat's.

His marriage has turned out badly. He married Marion Tweedy at Gibraltar, daughter of Major Tweedy and a Jewess who was in some unspecified disrepute. Marion appealed to the exotic, oriental side of his nature; especially as he was fond of music, and she sang. They had two children; Millicent, a girl who though she has just reached her fifteenth birthday is already following in her mother's footsteps, and a son, Rudy, who lived only eleven days. The death of Bloom's son affected him profoundly; Bloom had longed (and still longs) for a son with all the fervor of the Jew. Since his son's death, he has not had normal relations with his wife; his inner self perhaps refuses to risk more such tragedies; the consequence has been a slight twist in his mentality. Meanwhile, Mrs. Bloom, who had had her affairs before she met him, and had always been attracted by more virile men, shamelessly has given herself to a succession of lovers. Bloom's humiliation is deep and constant. Everywhere in Dublin he is known as Marion Bloom's husband; people are always asking after her; and at present he is busily avoiding sight or hearsay of Blazes Boylan, her latest — a smart, red-haired lad, who writes popular songs and is planning to take Mrs. Bloom on a concert-tour.

Yet Mr. Bloom really adores his wife. Though at times he vaguely thinks of desertion or divorce, he has dreamed of her the night before; his first alcoholic reverie of love in night-town is of her; he gets her breakfast while she lies in bed; buys her a book and orders her lotion. At the same time, his starved instincts are reaching out in a number of illicit directions: under a false name he is corresponding with a girl he has never seen; his eyes observe women in the streets, statues in the museum, girls on the sea-shore . . . . It is an obviously misfit marriage.

Dublin is Hell to him; he even has vague ideas of running away from it all. Church, state, friendship, marriage, personal achievement are all denied to him. And his humble aspirations and ideals only make the situation worse. His interest in music and science are not enlightened by any genuine taste or intelligence, and find no encouragement. He is desperately lonely.

But when he sees Stephen, he recognizes in him at once his ideal. His frustrate sense of paternity leads him to follow uninvited the person who incarnates all that he could wish his son to be. Stephen is a poet, an intellectual, an aristocrat, a brilliant conversationalist surrounded by admiring friends, one who appreciates ideas and the arts, a person of taste, of brains, of knowledge, unhampered by the drawbacks of race and bad schooling. But the boy has been drinking and has got into unworthy company. Bloom must follow him at all hazards, and look after him; perhaps in him he can find a friend — a son.

Thus Bloom is Ulysses, the wanderer, in search of his home, his wife, his son. But the keynote to his character is not to be found in Homer. For Bloom is the opposite of Stephen; and the opposite of Satan is the Christ — the Christ who constantly sacrifices the selfhood and approaches everything with love and humility, only to be rejected and crucified.[21]

[21] Parallelism with the *Odyssey* reveals Bloom's fundamental significance. In Book IX is the account of Ulysses's adventure with Polyphemus, the one-eyed, pitiless giant. The Ithacans escape from his clutches by getting him drunk and boring out his eye. Ulysses says that his name is Noman, but when he is sailing away, he announces his true name, at which Polyphemus is so enraged that he throws a mountain-top after the ship, but misses it.

This proclamation of his true name is Ulysses's one slip, and the turning-point of the whole epic. For possessed of that real name, the Cyclops is able to inform his father Poseidon who it was that blinded him; and Poseidon's wrath is the cause of Ulysses's subsequent misfortunes.

The corresponding section of Joyce's book is the scene at Barney Kiernan's, where the nameless "citizen" (nameless, not because he is Noman, but because

The contrasts between Stephen and Bloom extend to such small details as that Stephen won't bathe, while Bloom's bath is emphasized. Stephen drinks but scarcely eats throughout the book; Bloom eats, but takes only two drinks on the disastrous party. Stephen is haunted by his mother's ghost, Bloom by his father's. Each has had a dream the night before which he can only half-remember: Bloom's of his wife, Stephen's of an escape from harlots. Both like to discourse at length, but both go unheard, though one has ideas and the other not. Stephen is pointed out wherever he goes; Bloom is always overlooked. One is a poet, the other a scientist in temperament; but the poet is too much of a realist and logician, while the scientist is too much of a romancer;[22] and neither can produce anything which the world has thought worthy its notice. Both are timid of danger, though one can brave a fight to preserve his pride, and the other can take risks

he is Everyman; yet established on p. 337 to be Mr. Giltrap, Gerty Macdowell's maternal grandfather), his single-visioned anti-semitism aggravated by alcohol, heaves an empty biscuit-tin after Bloom (who is driving away, chased by the dog he fed), but misses his aim, being blinded by the sun. The immediate cause for his shot is Bloom's remark: "Christ was a jew like me" . . . the announcing of his true name, if we are to believe that Joyce carried his parallelism so far.

Throughout the scene, Bloom is compared to the Messiah, and we may trace in the episode a vague outline of the Nativity, Ministry, and Passion. "I'll crucify him, so I will," yells the Citizen as he heaves the tin, thus causing the mock-earthquake which accompanies the Crucifixion; and a mock Ascension concludes the section.

Stephen recognizes Bloom as the Christ on pp. 406, 597.

Of course Bloom and Stephen are not the *persons* of Christ and Satan; they are human beings dominated by the moral principles best typified by Christ and Satan; whose theological significances are therefore the keys to the characters of Joyce's agonists.

[22] Bloom is always softening and altering facts in his mind. For example, nothing could be more specific than the Citizen's insults. Yet Bloom tries to persuade himself that "what I said about his God made him wince" (p. 362); by the time he talks it over with Stephen he says: "A soft answer turns away wrath. He hadn't a word to say for himself, as everyone saw" (p. 597); and on p. 612 he is chuckling over the whole affair.

in service of another. Both are poor; but Stephen is a spendthrift with his little; Bloom is very careful of his cash; and neither gets any thanks for it.

The importance of these contrasts, which always meet in the same eventual futility, grows, until they divide the universe between these two figures. Stephen, though naturally an ascetic, is compact of the Seven Deadly Sins. His egotism, or Pride, leads him into a bitter Envy of those more successful than himself; and this Envy bursts forth into a Hatred that causes him to mistake his best friend for an enemy. He is a non-productive victim of Sloth; "count me out," he says, when there is mention of working. Of the two sins of the flesh, we have already commented on his Lust; and just as he had punished his body with the worst of women, so he punishes his Gluttony in the same manner, by refusing his body decent food, but scourging it with absinthe and whiskey. He insults his Avarice in the same manner, by flinging away his month's earnings in a wild party, though he constantly resents his debts. Bloom is the converse of Stephen's vices. He is humble, not self-centered; admiring, not envious; loving, not hating, until he mistakes his enemies for friends. He works hard trying to get advertisements, he eats delicately and drinks very temperately, he is frugal with his money but generous when there is due cause. It is true that he is lustful; but his sins there are chiefly of the imagination; the event usually does not come off.

Stephen is always expiating his own sins; while Bloom is continually expiating the sins and even the misdemeanors of others as well as of himself. For example, Stephen is haunted by his mother's ghost, because they say he killed her; but Bloom is haunted by his father's ghost because his father killed himself out of profound despair.

Both are trying to make themselves better; but any attempt to escape from Hell merely opens another world of torment. "Oh, what a vile and abject thing is man unlesse he raise himselfe above humanity!" Montaigne once remarked (quoting Heraclitus). Stephen and Bloom have both tried it, becoming indeed less vile but also more unhappy. The truly religious temperament of the one, and the truly sceptical temperament of the other both lead to the same unbelief; neither the instinct for religion nor the lack of it brings comfort. To try to break loose from everything proves as futile as the attempt to attach oneself to everything. In marriage or out there is no love; and lust is merely a further torture, though Stephen is sternly self-controlled while Bloom is not. Neither can find the sympathy or friendship he needs: one because he always demands that the other make the first advance, the other because he is always making the first advance himself. Both sense beforehand that each new attempt will fail. The aristocrat in spirit is no more successful than the vulgarian.

Thus the way of Satan and the way of Christ lead alike to futility and despair. Stephen is too selfishly himself to give even the least particle of himself for any cause in any way; Bloom, on the other hand, gives so lavishly of himself to anybody and anything that he loses the respect of others and even of himself. Pride leads to isolation no more inevitably than humility; or hate than love. Consequently both men are excluded from the friendship of man, the love of woman, and self-realization.

There is not much to choose between them, after all, though we may say that Stephen is the more enviable and Bloom the more likable. But we feel very little envy or liking; instead, we are overwhelmed with a profound pity — a pity that is only heightened when we realize that outside a book they

would be unendurable. Joyce has held the scales even between Christ and Satan; he has discovered that neither is the God of This World.

But have Satan and Christ nothing to say to each other when they meet in Hell? Cannot one despair cry to another?

The night-town scene is the dramatic climax of the book, but the heart of the tragedy lies in the conversation of Stephen and Bloom afterwards.

Stephen, knocked out by Private Carr, comes to, lying in the street, with the kindly figure of Mr. Bloom leaning over him. Mr. Bloom helps him up, brushes him off, gives him his hat and stick, and leads him to a cabman's shelter for coffee and a roll. Stephen is sobered by the blow, but his brain is still deadened with alcohol; somewhat dazed, he hears Mr. Bloom talking away at a great rate, giving him advice about wine and women and treacherous friends, asking when he dined last and where he is to sleep, commenting on a passing prostitute and the nature of the soul, pressing undrinkable coffee on him, detailing the persecution of the Jews, patriotism, and so forth. He produces an old photograph of his wife for Stephen's admiration. Seeing that Stephen cannot swallow the coffee and roll, he suggests that they get some cocoa at his house, and on the way he chatters about music, deprecating Wagner but praising Mozart, Meyerbeer, and Flotow. Stephen says that he prefers Elizabethan music; Bloom, never having heard of the names he mentions, says that Mrs. Bloom is passionately fond of music of any kind.

Once in the house, they discuss more such subjects over their cocoa, with little success, as Stephen does not share Bloom's interests or tastes, and talks about more music that Bloom knows nothing of. Bloom suggests that they meet often for further conversation, and arranges for Stephen to

give Mrs. Bloom lessons in Italian. Stephen agrees to do so, but the chances are that he will not; in fact, he is so bored by Bloom's shallow loquacity that he refuses even to sleep a few hours on a cot there.[23]

It is beginning to dawn when he leaves. *Encore un jour.* The two part, neither having suspected the agonies of the other. And Stephen, having broken with his father and his friend, has nowhere to lay his head.

Bloom, left alone, goes to bed; waking his wife, he tells his adventures (some of them), in which the figure of Stephen is the central fact. Evidently he is pleased with his doings, for without thinking he orders his breakfast in bed, quite like a man, and drops off to sleep. The reveries of Mrs. Bloom, as she also drops off, conclude the book.

These reveries are the climax of nastiness in the book, and stamp Marion Bloom as one of the most unpleasant characters in all literature. Her cheap tastes and her illicit loves are paraded at full length. As she unravels the web of that day's weaving, her thoughts wing their ignoble flight through her brain, unchecked by any "censorship," naked of any fantasy, with a frankness which outdoes Swift's *Lady's Dressing Room.*

This section of the book forms, however, the epilogue necessary to complete the study of Hell. Stephen and Bloom have both striven to escape; and one might conclude from their ill success that the best way to live is not to struggle, but to sink back into the mud and take things as they come. For Marion Bloom is the Woman who Does, with apparently none of the inhibitions that torture her husband and Stephen. A miserable vulgarian, she tastes life at the full. She represents all the immodesty of nature, uncurbed by discipline of love or pain.

[23] Bloom admires Stephen and bores him, just as M'Coy admires and bores Bloom (pp. 70-73, 225).

If Stephen is Satan and Bloom is Christ, she is the old Adam (or rather Eve), the flesh unenlightened by any spiritual striving, carnality triumphant, who (in the Greek symbology) is identified with Gaea, the Earth-Mother.

But she, too, is frustrate. Man cannot live by flesh alone, though in Hell it seems to be the all-in-all. Happiness does not lie along the easiest way. Her list of lovers is long because she cannot love any one of them; some hidden ideal always leaves her helplessly unsatisfied and disgusted; a Donna Juanita, she always expects that the next one will be the real person. In Blazes Boylan she has met the perfect male beast, but she is quite ready to drop him in favor of Stephen, sight unseen.

The hidden ideal that torments her is really her husband, after all. Her reveries begin with an emphatic approval of his ordering her to get his breakfast in bed; thereafter, her thoughts turn regularly to him. She likes something in him; she dislikes something else; she is jealous of the women who attract or merely admire him; and so forth. Her peripatetic loves are but the different stanzas of the song to which he is the ever-returning chorus. She is wholly preoccupied with him, although he is not man enough for her.

Thus Satan, Christ, and Eve (or should we say Rahab?)— that is, pride, love, and the flesh — fail alike to find happiness in this world. And the pagan creed fails, as well as the Catholic creed. Homer told of a far-off time when life was clean and clear; when nakedness was nudity; when the laundress was a princess and the wrecked sailor a king; when tragedy was noble and when deep love triumphed at the end. Always man dreams of himself as hero, king, god; and in those primitive times he realized his dream. Then the cycle turned and the dream faded; civilization crept like a disease across the

world. Under shale and shard of reality the dream withdrew; Ithaca and Olympus set below the horizon of Time. In the Hell that has risen around us, the Fact of reality shrieks its No against every assumption of the Truth which is romance. Telemachus will not recognise his father; Ulysses, when he reaches his home, cannot bend the bow; and Penelope has already yielded to a whole series of Antinouses.

Yet —

> Under every grief and pine
> Runs a joy with silken twine.

When Homer's Ulysses was in Hades, he beheld there even the mighty Hercules — "his phantom form, for he himself is with the immortal gods reveling at their feasts, wed to the fair-ankled Hebe, child of great Zeus and golden-sandaled Here."

And Blake, in his analysis of the universe, proclaimed that "what are called vices in the natural world are highest sublimities in the spiritual world,"[24] because "the soul of sweet delight can never be defiled."

Stephen Dedalus himself has some such idea when he muses: "It was revealed to me that those things are good which yet are corrupted which neither if they were supremely good nor unless they were good, could be corrupted."[25]

This Paradise where the heart of good is uncorrupt, and where the Dream remains Truth, is planted too deep in the

[24] Startling as this may sound, it was apparently not too much for Dr. Holmes: "For you may depend upon it, there is not one of these vices that has not a head of its own — an intelligence — a meaning — a certain virtue, I was going to say — but that might, perhaps, sound paradoxical." (*Autocrat*, Boston, 1886, p. 188).

[25] P. 136. Stephen suddenly recollects that the idea came from St. Augustine. It will be found in the *Confessions*, VII, xii (18).

human brain for the light of ordinary day ever to reach it; yet it is there; and it rules our outward lives; for it is the joy actually existing there that makes man unsatisfied with all else, and turns him out, a wanderer across the world. Paradise is the soul of Hell.

Joyce indicates his belief in this Paradise by one or two incidents placed so strikingly that they cannot escape notice.

Stephen, as we have said, adored his mother; his happiest memories are of the times when he sang to her Oona's song from the second act of Yeat's *Countess Cathleen*:

> . . . . And no more turn aside and brood
> Upon Love's bitter mystery . . . .

And at the very moment when Fate is dealing hardest with him: when he is drunk and hungry, without family or friend, driven crazy by the phantom of his mother, and knocked senseless in the street, suddenly to his lips come fragments of the song; and we know that the real Stephen is among the deathless gods, singing to the mother from whom he has never been parted.[26]

At this same moment, Mr. Bloom, standing over Stephen's body, mumbling the Masonic oath of brotherhood, sees the vision of his son. Had Bloom been less in the outer world at that moment, the son would have recognized him.

And Marion Bloom, too, has her center where romance is undefiled. Even as the vulgarian Mrs. George, in Shaw's *Getting Married*, sinks into a trance and reveals the heart of her feverish liaisons to be pure ecstasy, so Mrs. Bloom at last sinks to sleep and returns to the real motive of her existence:

[26] As though to emphasize the triumph of Dream over Fact, Joyce, himself an ultra-Realist, has chosen a song by Yeats, who in those years was the ultra-Romanticist.

her love for her husband. As her miserable thoughts trail off into silence, the air suddenly grows brighter with the scent of flowers; birds are flying and music is playing; she is back at Gibraltar; and Leopold is calling her a flower of the mountain, and kissing her, ". . . . and yes I said Yes I will Yes." This "Yes" is the first as well as the last word in her section of the book; it punctuates her reveries meaninglessly at first; but now, as she drifts into the deeper world, its significance becomes plain.

> Truly, My Satan, thou art but a Dunce,
> And dost not know the Garment from the Man.
> Every Harlot was a Virgin once,
> Nor can'st thou ever change Kate into Nan.

And this "Yes," with which the book ends, is the affirmation of eternal Paradise of Dream against the "No" of the temporal Hell which is this world.

S. Foster Damon

RABBITS

THERE was a strong wind blowing and it caked the ground under the tulip stalks. Made it hard and dry and bleached the top crust. Blew the fallen tulip petals this way and that, crumpled and faded. The beds had done well this year. Pink petals and lavender, petals carmine and maroon had been held high by sturdy stems, opening wide in the morning and closing together into tight little cones at evening. Day by day he had watched them. Now they had scattered like birds from a nest. In a few days they would be nothing but colorless shreds, drying and curling up in the wind and the sun. When the stalks began to die down he would jerk them away from their bulbs and plant something else in the bed. Last year there had been petunias.

He took up a handful of earth and sifted it between his fingers. Some of the powdery dust blew up into his face and settled in the small beads of perspiration which the wind had not dried. It was a hot afternoon, and the wind was hot, too. Sultry. He crumbled another handful and smoothed it down with the back of a trowel. When he had loosened all the soil in the bed he would give it a good watering. This would lay the dust and bring back that rich, brown color he liked. He would water it two or three times and fool this idiotic wind. Everything looked so tired today.

The bleeding-hearts were dancing a crazy jig like so many puppets in a marionette show. Bleeding-hearts! What did they know about hearts that bleed, bobbing about in the breeze over there near the privet hedge, waiting for the cool and quiet of nightfall? He got up to stretch his legs and tuck in

the old shirt which was edging itself out of his trousers. The wind was stronger and it blew the ashes out of his pipe.

Hello! Cut worms. One of the seedling asters he had planted the week before was lying flat. He picked it up and threw it into the basket he had for weeds and stones. Digging down near the roots he found the murderer, fat and juicy, rolled into a satiated ball. He laid him in the palm of his hand and looked at him. Despoiler of beauty. No, he wouldn't put him down on the walk and step on him. Not a chance. It was the sort of thing that made him cringe. Over the hedge with him. Over into the Harris's driveway. He could never get back to the asters. An automobile was sure to finish him. A catbird flew around the corner of the house and lit on a branch of mountain-laurel. Might have liked the cutworm. Too late now. Probably preferred daintier morsels, sitting there so slim and sleek. Thirsty at any rate. The catbird had flown over to the bird-bath and was leaning over to drink. Was showing the little patch of red beneath his tail. Queer to have the only spot of color where you couldn't see it.

The bed was weeded now and the earth broken up so that the water could get in and seep down to the roots. It needed more fertilizer. Next Spring he would get a load of manure and enrich this poverty-stricken, clayey substance, so full of potential life a month or two before. But what could you expect of May, with no rain for days and a hot wind blowing? May was a disappointing month. It had neither the crisp promise of April nor the prodigal fulfillment of June. The watering-can was in the barn and he started down to get it. That cluster of white rhododendron was too heavy, sagging with the weight of its own luxuriance. He clipped it close to the trunk and laid it back on the grass. Later on, he would take it in to Helen. He leaned down to scratch up the ground

a little with the point of his pruning-shears, but stopped before he had finished.

"Poor little fellow, what's happened to you?"

The chestnut-colored body of a young rabbit was lying there under the rhododendron. He knew that it had not been dead more than a day or two. Maybe not that long. The fur was clean and smooth and had lost none of its lustre. The hind legs seemed to have shrunk a little but the head and ears looked firm. Had death come peacefully there under the rhododendron or with some vitiating torture? Who could say?

He got a shovelful of dirt but waited a minute before he threw it on. It seemed a pity to turn the little animal into fertilizer. It probably hadn't had more than four or five weeks of life. It didn't seem to be doing any harm, just lying there. If the maggots had begun their work of purification they were starting on the under side. Nothing marred the soft ripple of fur. It seemed to invite the caress of his earth-stained fingers, not the brutal annihilation accomplished by that simple turn of the wrist.

Oh, yes, he had started for the watering-can. He kept it down in the barn under the sink. It had a leak around the spout, but he would rather sprinkle the flower-beds any day than eat. He liked to see the blossoms and the leaves sparkle as the drops fell on them. To watch the water coursing down the stems until it reached the soil. It would be more fun than usual today since it was so hot and dry. The prospect of a shower never deterred him from watering. He regarded it as a benediction which, after a day in the garden, always took precedence over putting away the tools. Filling the can, he started back to the beds.

What, a second rabbit? Or had he been trying to bury the other one alive? Sitting on a pile of weeds in the path was a

round ball of fur as much like the first as two peas in a pod. He looked under the rhododendron as he went by, but the mound of earth was undisturbed. His conscience was clear. Could the rabbit, perched there so quietly on his weedy throne, be hunting for a little lost brother? How pleasant it was to see him sitting there without a fear in the world. That's what comes of being so young. A full-grown rabbit would have scampered off quick as lightning, as if all men were enemies.

A bad thing for gardens, rabbits. They ate everything that tasted good. Harris was always cursing them. Said he'd get rid of them some way. He remembered how pathetic the crocusses had looked, all nibbled off at the top, sticking straight up in the air. Lucky he didn't have any vegetables. Rabbits were more selective in the matter of flowers and didn't do so much damage. Young rabbits were nice. They weren't afraid of people and their appetites were small. This little fellow could stay as long as he liked. Look at him sitting over there, all hunched up, so comfortable and sleepy.

The last drop of water dripped out of the spout and he started back to the barn to refill the can.

"Bunny, bunny," he whispered as he went by, "how do you happen to be sitting still all this time?"

He put down the can and went a few steps nearer as the rabbit acknowledged his greeting with a lazy blink.

"It's not becoming of you to show so little animation."

He leaned over and rubbed his fingers together in what he thought was a coaxing gesture. The rabbit did nothing more than turn his head to one side. Then he picked up his rake and smoothed the little back with the end of the handle. Still no effect. Persistent, he put it under the stomach and raised it a little. Then with a few feeble hops the rabbit left the

pile of weeds and went to the edge of the fern bed to continue his doze undisturbed. Strange actions for those usually so timorous. Evidently something was wrong. There might be two dead rabbits before the shower broke.

He went on with his work, glancing from time to time in the rabbit's direction to see if he had thrown off his lethargy. But the only movement was a slight nodding of the head in an attempt to frighten away the large iridescent fly that had come out of the air to annoy him. The fly had scented death and set about worrying his quarry.

This was distressing. He couldn't go into dinner with the thought of this resigned suffering right under the window. Why hadn't the rabbit elected to die in Harris's yard? Or in shady privacy under one of the rhododendrons where no one could see him? There he was right out in plain sight at the edge of the fern bed, nodding away. Clapping his hands he made a series of noises like someone trying to scare a cat, but the rabbit wouldn't move. He must be pretty far gone. Something must be done. You couldn't cover up a dead thing with a shovelful of dirt right out in the front of a bed. In the morning he would have to be moved.

The fly had been joined by two others and all three had lighted on the rabbit's nose, paying no attention to his feeble efforts to shake them off. Oh, this was terrible! He couldn't stay there watching the little animal get weaker and weaker. Yet he couldn't resist the morbid temptation of turning his head from time to time for another look when he tried to work facing the other direction. He remembered how people drowned mice by putting them in a pail of water. Possibly that would be a good idea. The watering-can. If he just picked up the rabbit by the ears and dropped him in, he could go away for a few seconds until the drowning was over. No,

he wouldn't pick the rabbit up by the ears, and feel him squirming and wriggling. He couldn't. He might get him up on the shovel and tip him into the can. Would that work? He might jump or slip off or the sharp edge of the shovel might cut him. No, it wasn't a good idea after all.

The shovel. That was better. One quick blow and it would all be over, and he wouldn't ever have to see that soft little body drenched and dripping. Wouldn't ever have to turn it out of the watering-can into some bushy, hidden place. A lateral blow from the heavy shovel would send the frail little bundle of fur way back into the bed under the taller ferns and he would never have to look at it. He could stand in front of the rabbit so that the impact would come on the head and there would be no pain for more than a second. He could swing the shovel sideways in his right hand and look off in another direction.

No, he was damned if he would kill a little rabbit. Take a big shovel, whack him on the head, send him flying. He would die anyway within a few hours. Better to let things take their course. Probably he was in a state of coma and wasn't suffering at all. Fish were coldblooded and didn't suffer, someone had told him. Maybe animals didn't know pain either, although he knew he had often seen it in their eyes. The prodigality of nature! Millions of little rabbits must at that very minute be lying huddled together in subterranean maternity wards biding their time to come up into the light and raise the devil with somebody's vegetables. Why make all this fuss about one casualty? Two casualties. He remembered how neatly he had covered the little brown pile under the rhododendron. It was certainly a coincidence. Not so strange if there had been one dead rabbit. But two.

Not dead yet. There he was stock still, with the flies buzzing

around him and the wind madly blowing the fern leaves at the back of the bed. A pitiful, cowed object crouching on the ground waiting for death. And a man, towering above him, watering the flower-beds, not brave enough to put a small animal out of his misery. A man right enough, but still the little boy who ran away to hide when his father was killing a chicken for Sunday dinner.

With a fury he picked up the shovel. He was perspiring like a man coming out of a faint. His nausea was akin to seasickness. He took a few steps forward and swung the shovel with all his might. With strength enough to kill a mad dog. Why hadn't he looked at what he was doing? Why had he looked away when his aim had to be exact? He might have known it would be this way. The shovel had struck the ground and had not touched the rabbit until the rebound. It had hit him on the side and sent him only about a foot away. His body was under a fern leaf that hung over until it almost touched the ground.

Great God! What a clumsy cow he was! A well-directed blow on the head would have done the trick. He had messed the thing up completely. There was no sign of movement under the fern leaf, but how did he know he had killed the rabbit? He might be breathing still. Should he raise the leaf and try to see? No, that was the thing he had planned to avoid all along. A shovelful of dirt would put the hated object out of sight forever. But the slow stifling of an animal that was sick, and now maimed by his own hand, would be the supreme act of cruelty. He nerved himself for the only alternative and brought the flat side of the shovel down on the fern leaf as one would swat a fly with a newspaper. Mechanically, he threw on a heaping shovel of dirt and then with twitching fingers drew the leaf out from under. The stem was

mashed and bent but not broken. The crumpled fronds spread like a weeping-willow close over the mound. No one would have guessed that it was there. Much less what it contained.

A few drops of rain had fallen and the sky was growing dark. The wind felt chilly and thunder rumbled in the distance as he walked up the side path that led to the front steps. There would be a heavy shower. The weeds he had pulled lay in a wilted, disorderly heap near the fern bed. A few feet away was the basket he had brought out to put them in. His pruning-shears lay open on the edge of a grass border. The spray of rhododendron had blown out into the driveway and the empty watering-can had fallen onto its side. His tools were scattered all around the garden. He had never left them out before.

Helen was putting some wild azalea into a vase on the hall table when he opened the door.

"Had a good time?" she asked.

His reply was noncommittal.

"Mr. Harris told me he couldn't grow a thing in his garden," she went on, "on account of the rabbits eating everything up. He said he had put out some poison for them."

"Really?"

"Yes. It's a funny thing to do, isn't it? I don't see what makes them eat it."

"Neither do I," he said, starting upstairs. "Is there enough hot water for a bath?"

DALE WARREN

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE AT HAVANA

I

CANARIES in the morning, orchestras
In the afternoon, balloons at night. That is
A difference, at least, from nightingales,
Jehovah and the great sea-worm. The air
Is not so elemental nor the earth
So near.
But the sustenance of the wilderness
Does not sustain us in the metropoles.

II

Life is an old casino in a park.
The bills of the swans are flat upon the ground.
A most desolate wind has chilled Rouge-Fatima
And a grand decadence settles down like cold.

III

The swans . . Before the bills of the swans fell flat
Upon the ground, and before the chronicle
Of affected homage foxed so many books,
They warded the blank waters of the lakes
And island canopies which were entailed
To that casino. Long before the rain
Swept through its boarded windows and the leaves
Filled its encrusted fountains, they arrayed

The twilights of the mythy goober khan.
The centuries of excellence to be
Rose out of promise and became the sooth
Of trombones floating in the trees.
The toil
Of thought evolved a peace eccentric to
The eye and tinkling to the ear. Gruff drums
Could beat, yet not alarm the populace.
The indolent progressions of the swans
Made earth come right; a peanut parody
For peanut people.
And serener myth
Conceiving from its perfect plenitude,
Lusty as June, more fruitful than the weeks
Of ripest summer, always lingering
To touch again the hottest bloom, to strike
Once more the longest resonance, to cap
The clearest woman with apt weed, to mount
The thickest man on thickest stallion-back,
This urgent, competent, serener myth
Passed like a circus.
Politic man ordained
Imagination as the fateful sin.
Grandmother and her basketful of pears
Must be the crux for our compendia.
That's world enough, and more, if one includes
Her daughters to the peached and ivory wench
For whom the towers are built. The burgher's breast,
And not a delicate ether star-impaled,
Must be the place for prodigy, unless
Prodigious things are tricks. The world is not
The bauble of the sleepless nor a word

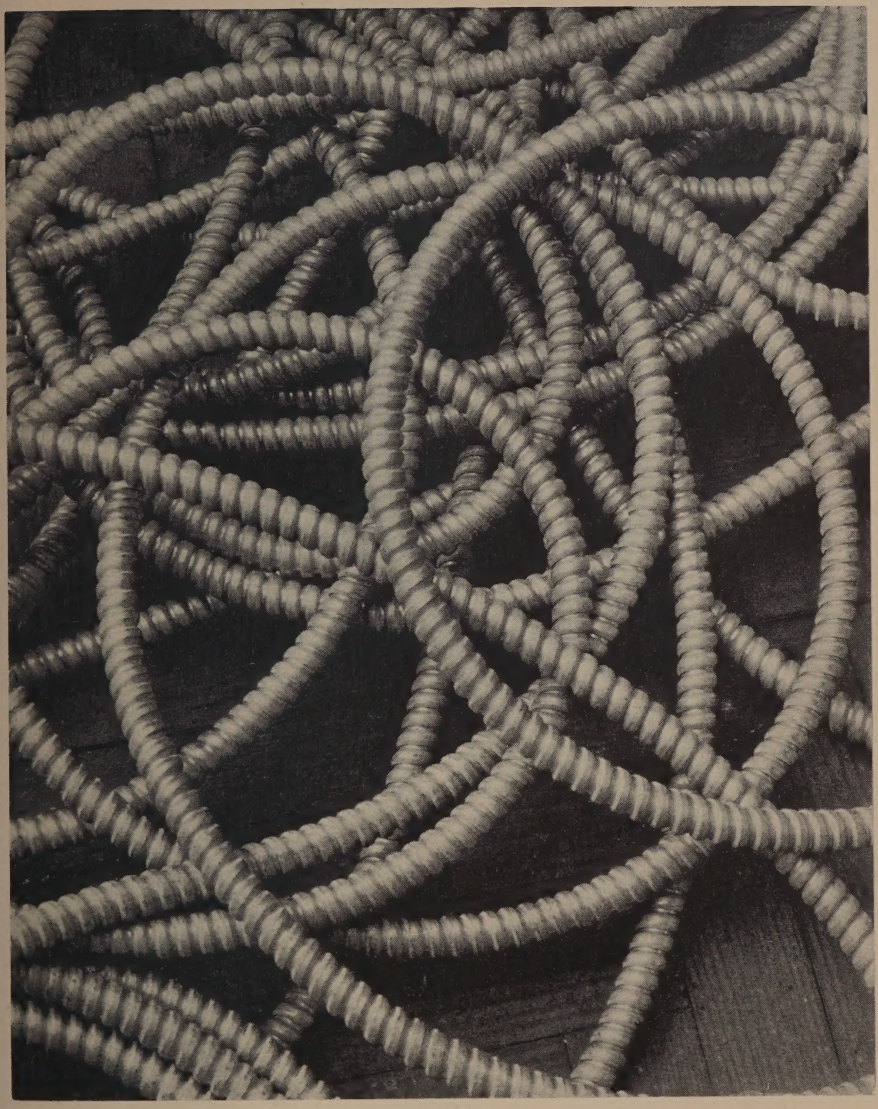
That should import a universal pith
To Cuba. Jot these milky matters down.
They nourish Jupiters. Their casual pap
Will drop like sweetness in the empty nights
When too great rhapsody is left annulled
And liquorish prayer provokes new sweats: so, so:
Life is an old casino in a wood.

IV

Is the function of the poet here mere sound,
Subtler than the ornatest prophecy,
To stuff the ear? It causes him to make
His infinite repetition and alloys
Of pick of ebon, pick of halcyon.
It weights him with nice logic for the prim.
As part of nature he is part of us.
His rarities are ours: may they be fit
And reconcile us to our selves in those
True reconcilings, dark, pacific words,
And the adroiter harmonies of their fall.
Close the cantina. Hood the chandelier.
The moonlight is not yellow but a white
That silences the ever-faithful town.
How pale and how possessed a night it is,
How full of exhalations of the sea . . .
All this is older than its oldest hymn,
Has no more meaning than tomorrow's bread.
But let the poet on his balcony
Speak and the sleepers in their sleep shall move,
Waken, and watch the moonlight on their floors.
This may be benediction, sepulcher,
And epitaph. It may, however, be

An incantation that the moon defines
By mere example opulently clear.
And the old casino likewise may define
An infinite incantation of our selves
In the grand decadence of the perished swans.

WALLACE STEVENS



Photograph — Ralph Steiner

Photograph

Ralph Steiner

Wooden Cat — Duncan Fergusson

Montserrat

Edward Forbes

THE INDIVIDUALISM OF IRVING BABBITT

I

ONE of the most vigorous thinkers of our time is Irving Babbitt. An historian of ideas, a psychologist, and a moralist, he has developed a philosophy of an inspired common sense, a reasoned plea for us to be "moderate, sensible, and decent." His books are marked by an underlying fervor of conviction, and an extraordinary consistency of doctrine. The humanistic attitude advocated in his first book he holds unaltered, but it has advanced in the course of his argument from the tentativeness of a diagnosis to the certainty of a successful operation. Though he seems always to be preaching the same thing, he seldom repeats himself. Buttressed by an enormous erudition his principles have become more definite in meaning and broader in application. He has ranged through many literatures, Oriental as well as Occidental, to collate the standards for a sound individualism. And he has analyzed the philosophies, the religions, and the arts of an unsound individualism. All sects and creeds that deviate from the human and religious norm, and prove fruitless in life, be they as different as dilettantes and philologists, humanitarians and imperialists, mystics and rationalists, he joins together and brands with the name romanticism. Mr. Babbitt is the militant guardian of traditional wisdom; and romanticism, which is his substitute for hell, includes all who have fallen into error.

With scientific exactitude[1] he has sought to establish the relations between romantic theory and practice, as betrayed in character, literature, and history. He believes that the person who violates the human law will be unhappy as inevitably as the child who thrusts his finger into the fire will be burnt. Consequently he exhibits the whole sequence of romantic psychology with judicial precision. He demonstrates that the romantic view of original genius, the playboy of his temperament, leads to the romantic theory of the imagination. The romantic imagination, arching like a rainbow over the experience of evil, of incompatible ideals and recalcitrant forces, then projects its desires for human brotherhood. It fashions an Arcadia where all men follow the impulses of each vagrant mood and live in sympathy. Instead of brotherly love, what actually results from the emancipation of temperament is "the lust of sensation and the lust of power, the Bohemian and the superman." The romanticist disillusioned by the refusal of reality to corroborate his dreams, then repudiates his daylight personality and, ironically withdrawing into his transcendental ego, pelts common sense with his paradoxes. If he descends from his invisible retreat and seeks solace in communion with nature he finds his solitude and melancholy there too.

This analysis of the psychology of unhappiness owes its cogency to Mr. Babbitt's cumulative disposal of his evidence and his scent for the coördinating idea. The discussion of romantic love, for example, included references to Rousseau, Shelley, and Wagner, only, the reader might well combat Mr. Babbitt's judgment. But when he further documents his case with mention of the myth of Pygmalion, the quest of the blue flower, the romantic re-interpretation of the Don Juan legend, mediaeval chivalry, Cervantes, Petrarch, Ruskin,

[1] *The New Laokoön*, pp. 201-202.

Hazlitt, Poe, Baudelaire, Chateaubriand, Novalis, Musset and George Sand, emotional memory and the differences between Wordsworth's and Aristotle's poetics, the reader must capitulate.

Of the many contrasts Mr. Babbitt draws between romanticism and classicism, the central one is that between the wonderful and the probable.[2] He occasionally associates the wonderful with novelty and "Love's sweetest part, Variety," with those occurrences customarily referred to as exceptional, strange, or unique. But in the main he intends to designate by the wonderful any imaginative synthesis of life which has been proved illusory when analyzed by the evidence of experience. The wonderful in this sense, far from claiming the diversity of life, belongs to imagination's specious unities. Opposed to the wonderful, as truth to falsehood, is the probable. The probable discussed by Mr. Babbitt bears no relation to the probability discussed by logicians and philosophers. The probable to him is the normal[3] "the total symmetry of life apprehended intuitively with the aid of the imagination." It is the unity to which human nature can validly aspire, attested by history and supported by reason. From history and through reason he has hoped to define the probable.[4] His definitions, consequently, do not contain the essence of terms but epitomize their classical meaning which he tacitly accepts as true. "Far be it from me," he writes, "to attempt any abstract definition of beauty. This, to judge from the vast majority of works on aesthetics, is a temptation of the enemy. But we may draw certain interesting conclusions if we study what men have actually meant at different epochs when they

[2] *The New Laokoön*, p. 72.

[3] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, pp. 54, 107, 201, 219.

[4] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, pp. 1, 15.

spoke of a thing as beautiful; if we note the curious way in which the word beauty has been warped to make it conform to the half truth that happened to be in vogue at any particular time."[5] Without a conception of the probable, derived from the classical meaning of terms, his analysis of romanticism is no more possible than *Les Caractères* of La Bruyère without the French seventeenth-century fusion of Christianity, paganism, and taste. Mr. Babbitt's sympathies rightly are French; he is an *honnête homme* born out of season, forced by the exigencies of academic life and an unfavorable intellectual atmosphere to the production of books designed more for the classroom than for the library. Where La Bruyère is a companion who characterizes people and customs, Irving Babbitt is a guide who characterizes ideas.

So his message is not new. It is an amalgam of all orthodoxies. He has annexed them as they afforded him a vocabulary, a methodology, and a discipline, without accepting their dogmas, and often without committing himself as to their literal truth. Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and the paganism of Plato and Aristotle are all domiciled together as spiritual brethren in the house of humanism. He would say with Joubert "Il faut opposer aux idées libérales les idées morales de tous les temps." Joubert found those ideas in Christianity and held a point of view which was a personal reflection of the purest Augustinian metaphysics. Mr. Babbitt embraces all traditions and holds no point of view personally his own. His unwillingness to father any single tradition or to identify himself with any recent movement makes his system seem austere and negative.

Isolation is the price of detachment, and what Mr. Babbitt has gained in historical perspective and psychological analysis we have lost by his withdrawal into his watch tower. His

[5] *The New Laokoön*, pp. 217-218.

main interest is in the individual, but he has conceived of the individual universally as a sort of man in general whose task in life is to work out standards in general. The individual, once he is plucked from his context of daily life, is not confronted with particular problems. He is neither statesman, nor painter, nor embarrassed lover, compelled to face some immediate aspect of experience, but simply man, who has broken with past authority and is seeking to supplant it experimentally. The dramatist for instance is interested in the history of the drama as he can bring it to bear on his problems. He wants precepts imbedded in practice, not principles alone.[6] Man in general abstracted from his environment has no such problems, and there will be no need to supply him with a tradition and a public. His only need will be that of a sound psychology and a general end. A disciplined imagination, a restraining will, and a mind carefully analytic of general ideas harmoniously working for happiness will satisfy the demands of man in general.

The traditions which Mr. Babbitt canvasses for his individual are repositories of varying psychologies and varying imaginative syntheses of life. His canvass of these traditions is empirical, inductive, and from the point of view of the psychologist and the historian of ideas. The psychologist as distinct from the biographer is not interested in the totality of any individual, but in those composite elements which establish the type. To him the individual is a trait, an example, a case, to be analyzed in abstraction from all the adventitious

[6] *Molière, La Critique de L'Ecole de Femmes:* "Vous êtes de plaisantes gens avec vos règles," exclaims Dorante, "dont vous embarrassez les ignorants et nous étourdissez tous les jours. Il semble, à vous ouir parler, que ces règles de l'art soient les plus grands mystères du monde; et cependant ce ne sont que quelques observations aisées, que le bon sens a faites sur ce qui peut ôter le plaisir que l'on prend à ces sortes de poèmes, et le même bon sens qui a fait autrefois ces observations les fait aisément tous les jours sans le secours d'Horace et d'Aristotée."

expressions of his personality. To the historian of ideas the individual is merely a witness, and it is indifferent to his testimony whether he be a Shelley, a Bergson, or a Ninon de Lenclos. Both the psychologist and the historian of ideas handle the individual scientifically as evidence which is valuable not in itself, but as illustrating some law of behavior, and some development of a theory. For this reason Mr. Babbitt seldom attempts balanced estimates of individuals and ignores the technical and aesthetic values of art.[7] His purpose is to equip man in general with sound abstract standards. With their aid man is prepared to seek happiness.

Happiness is the goal which Mr. Babbitt proposes. He has attacked romanticism because it failed to make for happiness, and he has advocated humanism and religion because they seemed requisite for its attainment. Humanism is the way of the world. Through harmonized desires it aims simply at secular satisfactions. It rests on the affirmation of a special activity, a special way of life, eligible to man alone, who achieves happiness by the exercise and observance of this activity. But independent as humanism is of religion in many ways, in one primary element he considers it dependent. That element is a transcendent "ethical will" the *frein vital*.[8] "The honest thinker, whatever his own preference, must begin by admitting that though religion can get along without humanism, humanism cannot get along without religion." Unknowable in its nature like electricity,[9] irreducible to rational formulation since it is higher than reason, beyond the scope of science and the competency of philosophy, outside of space and time, the will to Mr. Babbitt is an object of direct per-

[7] Of interest is the following remark: "Art rests primarily not on ethical but aesthetic perception." — *Rousseau and Romanticism*, p. 203.

[8] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, p. 380.

[9] *Masters of Modern French Criticism*, pp. 231, 247, 281.

ception, like a color, the essence of our humanity and superior to it. The Orient first realized its importance and in Buddhism the modes of its action were described in psychological terms, devoid of metaphysics and the dogmas of theology. The Greeks recognized it, but in their feast of reason they assigned it a secondary place. After the surfeit and collapse of Greek rationalism Christianity recovered it, and in the doctrine of grace the will became "the keystone of civilization." The moderns with their repudiation of Christian dogma lost sight of it. Under the regime of naturalism man acquired control over nature and lost mastery of himself. He has warred against other expanding individuals and inwardly lost peace. Only by rising above naturalism and subjecting the desires to the will, a principle of pause, restraint, and selection, can man become happy.

The will which humanism employs to secure worldly happiness is the inspiration of religion.[10] Religion to Mr. Babbitt is otherworldly, it constrains and finally extinguishes the desires. The end of religion is not mediation but meditation, not the *honnête homme* but the saint. As La Bruyère puts it, and here one can note the difference of temper between him and Mr. Babbitt, "Il y a deux mondes: l'un où l'on séjourne peu, et dont l'on doit sortir pour n'y plus rentrer; l'autre où l'on doit bientôt entrer pour n'en jamais sortir; la faveur, l'autorité, les amis, la haute réputation, les grands biens, servent pour le premier monde; le mépris de toutes ces choses sert pour le second, il s'agit de choisir."

From his point of view Mr. Babbitt's doctrine is consistent and complete. Man in general has been guarded against fallacious ideas and harmful actions. After the compendious exploration of romantic theory and psychology he has no cause

[10] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, pp. 22, 222, 252. *Democracy and Leadership*, pp. 6, 195.

to stumble into unhappiness. Instead he is on the road to happiness either as a humanist or as a religious man. If he is a humanist it is immaterial what vocation he follows; for the humanism of Irving Babbitt is not so much a subject matter, or a system of ideals, as a way of life. Man in general may particularize himself impartially as a merchant, statesman, or artist; what matters is the quality of will he displays, the universal he may body forth in his mode of life. If his mode of life is religious he will face an infinite series of increasingly delicate inner adjustments, a constant discipline, and a final mystic intuition transcending reason. In this ultimate[11] "genuine spiritual enthusiasm, the inner light, and the inner check are practically identical."

So to take the term humanism, as T. S. Eliot does in his "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt,"[12] arbitrarily limit its application, and then conclude that one has disposed of Mr. Babbitt's humanism, or precluded its possibilities is a pure misconception, or else untoward flippancy. And to state that "Mr. Babbitt makes it very clear, here and there throughout the book, that he is unable to take the religious view — that is to say he cannot accept any dogma or revelation; and that humanism is the *alternative* to religion," shows a double misconception. For first he does not regard humanism as an alternative or substitute for religion, but clearly makes it dependent upon religion. And secondly he does not mean by religion, dogma and revelation, but insight into the will and the inner life. It is possible to question the efficacy of a religion uncompounded of dogma and revelation, but if Mr. Eliot who is a master at literalness had meant to challenge Mr. Babbitt's conception of religion he would no doubt have done so explicitly. Mr. Babbitt prefers humanism to religion be-

[11] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, pp. 258. *The New Laokoön*, pp. 92-93.

[12] T. S. Eliot, *For Lancelot Andrewes*, p. 128.

cause it is more accessible to the mass of men, it being far easier to be human than to be superhuman. But in his ultimate evaluations and sympathies he favors religion. He believes that "the final reply to all the doubts that torment the human heart is not some theory of conduct, however perfect, but the man of character" and the man of greatest character to him is the saint.[13]

II

If I have argued against Mr. Eliot's interpretation of Mr. Babbitt, it is not to defend Mr. Babbitt — he requires no defense — but to rehearse the cardinal points of his doctrine, correlate his conclusions with his problems and interests, and thus to account for his omissions in terms of his system. In this way criticism can determine whether agreement with his analysis of romanticism necessitates acceptance of his more positive program. Mr. Babbitt's inquiry was partly into the possibility of standards, the criteria of their validity, and partly into their general nature. His method, aiming as it does at the general, fastens on tendencies, movements, and laws, and by its nature impelled him to dissociate himself from the traditions of the past, and to assume an attitude of detachment from the present. Hence his individualism is critical in the exact Kantian sense. It is meant more to rectify our knowledge and purge it of errors than to extend it to a deeper understanding of human nature. His individualism supplies the abstract categories of right reason, right will, and right imagination, which serves as prolegomena to any sound individualism, and which it is the business of criticism to make concrete. If Rousseau gave the wrong answers to the right questions, then Mr. Babbitt has restated the questions, excluded for his readers the false answers, and indicated the general conditions for their solution.

[13] Perhaps the essential difficulty is that Mr. Eliot, who is an Anglican, cannot conceive Mr. Babbitt's notion of religion to be religion at all.

But if one asks what it is that Mr. Babbitt values, what apart from refuting the ever recurrent expressions of romanticism he would have man do, the answer is hard to find. Aristotle would have man achieve his complete nature, and the sum of Aristotle's writings show in practice what he meant by the exercise of reason. And Santayana has described The Life of Reason, of that part of our experience which perceives and pursues ideals — all conduct as controlled and all sense so interpreted as to perfect natural happiness. Perhaps the romance of reason, its poetry and ideal harmonies, has intoxicated Santayana overmuch; like the romancer he has quietly floated his story beyond the limits of probable experience, and dwells too exclusively on that happy constellation of essences where human nature expresses itself in the pursuit of liberal ends, society, art, religion, and science, forgetful of the fact that material conditions may no longer permit their free realization, and so rapt in contemplation that no effort is made to bring them into existence. If *The Life of Reason* suggests a sanctuary from an uncongenial world in a remote and inaccessible empyrean which Santayana disdains to consider in relation to a thing so accidental, plebian, and transient as existence, he has at least patiently displayed the goods of his empyrean. Nobody can accuse Mr. Babbitt of neglecting the world. Rather he takes it too seriously; not however, in the everyday immediacy with which it confronts the laborer, but in that intermediate region of ideas which points to practice and yet lacks both the breadth of disinterested speculation and the utility of specific policy. With Aristotle he declares the end to be the chief thing of all. His excursions into the ideal have assured him that the ideal is no myth. But he has not wooed the ideal for itself, as the saint seeks God, and the sensualist pleasure. Value accrues to the ideal by reason of possible possession and enjoyment, but like

the Puritan he at heart distrusts happiness, and like the business man he has no time for it. He has made a *mariage de convenance* with the ideal and has spent its dowry of knowledge upon the unbalanced ledger of the world. Santayana has traversed the Life of Reason, Mr. Babbitt the Life of Unreason; neither has regarded the individual in the context of the particular conditions which he must overcome to fulfill his purpose.

Yet the notion of will insisted on by Mr. Babbitt as of first importance contains the seeds of a more fruitful individualism. In his doctrine, it is true, the will is scantily described and verbally confused with incongruous issues. If the will is directly revealed to us by perception, like a color, then manifestly perception can tell us nothing of its status in nature, and it is illegitimate to conclude from perception that the will is transcendent and higher than reason. Perception simply discloses its object; perspectives of history, science and philosophy must be adopted to define the ground and constitution of the object. To embark further in metaphysics and claim that the will is free only obscures the problem. For example, Mr. Babbitt discusses the nature of the imagination and defines it qualitatively by the standards of truth and falsity; nowhere does he consider it pertinent to contend that the imagination is free. The question of its antecedents, its physiological correlates and determining causes, belongs to another province, and it is a confusion of categories to intrude the one upon the other. What Mr. Babbitt is contending for is the fact of choice, selection, and control, which nobody denies. The instructive task is to follow the course of the individual *élan*, to indicate the obstacles inherent in the possibilities open to it. Into what structure of sustained emotions, responsible desires, and settled attitude should an individual translate his inchoate situation? Often the elements will not harmonize.

Action discovers contradictions of purpose, and fate is the logic whereby the inexorable penalty for inconsistency of character is exacted. When the necessity of choice between two incompatible ideals involves the destiny of others the result is tragedy. But restraint and exclusions though they inevitably accompany each choice of the will are not of its essence. Nor is tragedy, though tragedy is possible, whenever man preserves that probity of desire which is moral continuity, and honor admits no divorce from the choices of the past. Will is ideal desire and the problem of the will is one of values and knowledge of the heart's true affinities. "For that is to be called love which is true, otherwise it is desire," as St. Augustine says.[14] "The right will is well directed love, and the wrong will is ill directed love . . . now these motions are evil if the love is evil; good if the love is good."[15] Will, then, is the effort to accommodate the future to the total relevant values of one's present situation, to make them explicit and grounded in the truth of one's nature, and thus to attain that fullness, consistency, and integrity of being which is one's good.

If, as Aristotle observes, the subject matter of ethics is the actions of men, and tragedy is the imitation of an action, and poetry is more universal than history and more concrete than philosophy, the precise task of the moralist becomes apparent: namely, to limit himself to individual actions as represented in literature, and to trace the progress of the *élan* as it settles into order. And it is obvious that both Mr. Babbitt and Santayana as moralists have neglected this intense study of the will. It is possible that each action will conclude differently and illustrate an ideal incompatible with the rest. Although the moralist would then amass an infinite variety of actions,

[14] *Trinity*, III, iv.

[15] *City of God*, XIV, 7.

each with its irreducible good, he would still be enabled to evaluate them and arrive at a general definition of the will. For the actions and their entailed goods while individually incompatible would be intelligible and rationally justifiable. Human wants and satisfactions are quite comprehensible. That their particular occasions, Helen of Troy, the murder of Agamemnon, the trial of Socrates, are unique and can never be materially recaptured is unimportant. It is what they represent of human purpose, nobility, and destiny, that grants them significance. The ideal appealed to in an action, consequently, is not arbitrary. Rooted in human nature it possesses a structure which allows of a rational formulation. The moralist being human and confined to a particular body with its interest, preferences, and sympathies, will never be able to attain complete impartiality; a certain bias will always accompany his judgments; and to that extent the definition of the good is an unrealizable ideal. Deep within himself lies the eventual ground of his judgments and in the end it will dictate his definitions of truth, good and reality. Yet in part his hidden judgments will be formed by the actions surveyed. The moralist in discovering the will of man in its dramatic unfolding, in sorting and distinguishing its loyalties and attitudes, will likewise discover himself. Perhaps the enterprise is fantastic and even for approximate success requires more powers than are possessed by a single man; and those endowed with the imagination, the understanding, the honesty, and the industry necessary might well devote them to more creative labors; yet the soul of man has its intrinsic interest, the theme is not ignoble, and is rewarding.

Mr. Babbitt has always kept the soul and its destiny within view. If he has concentrated more on the manifestations of its unhappy fate than its inward development and triumphant expressions, it is because he believes that it is first nec-

essary to weed our thought of falsehood. If he seems too remote from the plight of given individuals and too abstracted from the problems of distinct activities, it is because he believes that it is first necessary to face what seems the general predicament of modern times. In those problems which he has set himself he has succeeded magnificently. It is true to say of him that all who have read his books remain his debtors. Those who converse with him find him as generous with his companionship, as in his thought he is moderate and urbane. No more fitting summary can be given of his work than in the words of the tribute he paid to Confucius. "Though his kingdom is very much of this world, he puts emphasis not merely on the law of measure, but also on the law of humility. He was humble both in his 'submission to the will of heaven' and in his attitude towards the sages of old. He aspired at most to be the channel through which the moral experience of his race that had accumulated through long centuries and found living embodiment in these sages should be conveyed to the present and the future; in his own words, he was not a creator but a transmitter."

BERNARD BANDLER II

SEVENTH DECLAMATION

(Foreword: *The preceding six of these Declamations appeared in* The Dial. *They, and whatever others may finally be issued, are meant to possess each a certain validity independent of their fellows, while forming a sequence which should provide added interpretation by its order. The Declamations are a kind of fictive moralizing, wherein the dogmas are prior to the events, though not always to be read as absolutely as they are stated.*

The scheme, when working most effectively, should result in the writer's associating a code with its origins, and in the reader's glimpsing a situation behind a morality. Yet perhaps our sincerity is less a question of message than of manner.

This manner is not wholly pliant. At times it has compelled circumlocution. We assumed that reality can arise out of any convention; and if we were wrong in this assumption, the aesthetic of the Declamations is fundamentally imperiled. For in their attempt to provide a literary, rather than a vicarious, experience they embody a deliberate pompousness which is unpardonable unless pompousness is not necessarily bad.

The Declamations originally took shape as an objective, realistic novel. The material is finally given in a different form because I could not write it as I at first planned. The problem of moving a character from one room to another became sufficiently difficult to make narrative impossible. Thus the present method arose as a subterfuge, an avoidance.

The earlier Declamations deal with our protagonist's somewhat self-inflicted undoing and flight. He is a very frank, a very earnest, a very conscientious man, in whom one need place slight confidence. He has an enquiring mind, through failure assisted to focus itself upon the norms of conduct. He is writing to a certain Anthony, whom he considers privileged. Being not letters, but epistles, his Declamations remain unsent. He has left Anthony in full possession and enjoyment of a young woman, Florence, whom he also considers privileged. He believes in the justice of their union, though at great

discomfiture to himself. In proclaiming criteria and imperatives, with the garrulity of envy he allows his reminiscences to encroach upon his aphorisms.

The Declamations may eventually be assembled under the title: Towards a Better Life — Being the Statement of an Attitude. I have also considered such titles as Manifesto, and Testament. They are here mentioned for their possible value as an indication of purpose.)

RIGHTLY they cherish their nationality, for the sole distinction they possess is as members of a group. And so great is their desire for conformity, that in an environment of geniuses they might even have shown talent. They are all men of honour when their interests are not at stake — and as their indifference spreads to many areas, the vocabulary of justice still flourishes and exerts influence. On doing them a kindness, if one is too modest in accepting thanks, he finds them prompt to join in the belittling of his services. They preface a boast by avowing their dislike of boastfulness, and before saying ill of a neighbour assure you that they will say ill of no one. He would be a monstrosity among them who did not speak of frankness when speaking with caution, or who would not vaunt his full confidence in another on requiring him to warrant his promises before a notary. For one may commit infractions of their code with impunity, but only by granting the validity of the code itself. Yet on defending a cause unpopular with them, he will be judged capable of thievery and extortion — and were a murder to be committed, they would enquire into his whereabouts before searching for a fiend. I went among them as one rebuked, for there are so many things which, if still preserved as echoes, would condemn me. To earn their respect, I left my self-doubts unuttered — and only by keeping my work unseen was I accorded the honours due my profession. Our divergencies

being total, I felt no need to reveal them; had they been less, I should have been more liable to altercation. No longer required to wrest an existence from the wilderness, their intolerance for their natural enemies is now trained upon one another. At night the dogs bark in behalf of their masters. The dogs of the different farms exchange challenges — and it is the family units of the countryside proclaiming their isolation.

Since the occasion two years ago when I disappeared abruptly, both you and Florence must think of me as lapsing into silence. Yet for me these long months have been restless with the shouting of many voices. As though housing a fugitive in secret, I have spent clandestine hours with my distress, living among people to whom I could mention nothing. Repeatedly I have speculated upon my unclean courtship, and marvelled at the contrasted accuracy of your advances. Testing the evidence that your affection for Florence was abating, I have imagined the growing tentatives of separation; I have pictured your love, like a turtle's heart, beating after death.

When walking through the country in early spring, you have observed a freshcut stump, a massive wound, bleeding its sap into the sunlight. The condition of its baffled roots, with their potentialities severed of purpose, could be the symbol of my predicament. Consider their inarticulate sorrow — yet despite vocabulary my own unhappiness tends to become as puzzled. I have given thought to my bodily well-being, attempting to promote by health a kind of physical certainty which, while not removing doubts, would deprive them of their maximum annoyance. During this self-imposed exile, I know that my eyes have been less eager — not through increased hopelessness, for my hopelessness was always thorough, but through absence of an object for them to light upon. I have thus felt the eagerness die out of my own eyes.

Yet could I think of Florence so recurrently without some reciprocation on her part? Are universal causes so disparate that this giving-out could remain unanswered? In speaking her name, I did so with no avowed faith in magic, no belief that the manipulation of the syllables could bring me command of the reality, but solely because my preoccupations made such labelling imperative. The word did not deny the emptiness about me, though I seemed to have cancelled something by the utterance of it.

Perhaps it is to Genevieve I owe my life — and at least to her I owe the fact that this evil was suddenly made bearable. In no way could she have been different and served to aid me as she did. Possessing the characteristics of great expressiveness, yet lacking some medium in which to embody her emotions, she was compelled to situate the experiences of poetry in the disposing of her own person. A pronounced gentleness, which was only secondarily absence of spirit, made her susceptible to certitude in another — and as I gave deep thought to the matter, I saw that, while she was still light-hearted, she was equipped already for her eventual abandonment to my wishes. Thus, I was healed by new designing — and for this I am to Genevieve permanently grateful. There have been moments when my delight in her loveliness was exceptional — when a posture or expression astonished me. "Cherish these," I have told myself, as I made efforts to fix them upon my memory. But though I still recall that there were scenes of this nature, their details have escaped me. And on occasions, during our companionship, when I have laid hands upon her, in my enjoyment I have wished that we were at liberty, ranging through a variety of cities, and that I might come upon her by hazard, meeting her in odd places, and thereby multiplying this experience under many guises. Was I, in inventing the fiction of my marriage, attempting to help

her despite myself, by suggesting an added cause to resist me? Or was I contriving to make her acquiescence more heinous in her own eyes, and thus more a tribute to myself — for I had imparted this false confidence previous to my demands as a lover, insisting that she keep it secret. As she did, and she believed me unquestioningly until I myself disabused her of her mistake, when admitting to her that I had asked another woman of the village to become my wife. In depriving Genevieve of some happiness — already precarious through being ill adjusted to the criteria of the community — I was also confirming her refinement, through perpetuating the uncertainties I had imposed upon her. Further, I had schooled her to suffering, by enlarging its terminology for her, by teaching her not only to bear it but to expect it — and my love, as well as my admiration, was intensified by her silent acceptance of my plans. A woman strengthened by lack of sensitivity would have exposed me, or at least rebuked me, but she received my disclosures without protest.

Can one be said to have misused a woman's gentleness who has always thought of it with gratitude, applying it for the very preservation of his own life, and even serving by his praise to aid her in the strengthening of such an attribute? I assured its permanency, by setting an appropriate stamp upon her, giving her as it were the cues to her most valuable development. Though slighting certain more obvious obligations, I was scrupulous in the shouldering of remoter ones, bringing always to my dealings with her a trying considerateness for these attitudes which I had assisted her to form. For I accepted the responsibilities I had incurred in putting our relationship upon so exceptional a basis — and that its intensity might be maintained, I spent many hours considering it while she slept. Though she offered to relinquish me, I refused to accept this opportunity to leave her forthwith at her bidding

—for I was resolved that she should not feel my marriage to another as implying the ridicule of her past delight in my praise. At much inconvenience, I still insisted upon clandestine meetings with her, to shield her from the thought that her own virtues had told against her — and only gradually, and with the appearance of speechless regret, I yielded to her insistence upon separation.

During the more tentative eras of the Church, there was a sect which held that one is purified by excess, virtue remaining in the sterile ash left from the conflagration. And similarly we may conclude that there is no inducement in refraining, and all issues must be both met and mirrored, though we may have cause to regret that our life is not such as to show this contention to its best advantage. I should willingly vote that no exhortation arise from a context which does it discredit, but I have not been certain of the reprehensible — could not decide what are the causes of insight and what exists in spite of it. If naturally inquisitive, we may find in failure an added incentive to brood upon the norms of justice. Exceptional wavering may end in constancy, as one learns the quicker to stabilize his conduct without regard for his moodiness. And too great good-will can lead a man to express his arguments vilely, thus giving us in one volume and for one price both a doctrine and its rebuttal. Should we speak of guilt, the crude-minded look to some evidence of slaying or suborning, some treachery for profit, unfit to perceive that we would indicate something so little subsequent to an offence that it might rather be called incentive than result. Yet I would ask no one to believe me virtuous, holding that all virginity were best enjoyed alone. I have sat at the window, silhouetted by the lamplight, thinking how a prowler without motive could slay me undetected. I have sought the spread of painlessness to further free areas of investigation, rejoicing that I did as the

rest of mankind though preferring to do so at some remove from my neighbours, submitting to a self-enquiry maintained without assent, accepting the continued dwelling upon my own attributes — a repetitiveness which, though not solicited, is the equivalent of great industry — and by many subterfuges of thought and action bargaining to keep insanity logically submerged.

In summer, during the late sunset, I have walked my acres (for can I not call that mine which I have earned by marriage) have walked these acres, knowing myself vaguely driven, asking for much, too much, expecting nothing. Vigorous young frogs chirp, doubtless enchantingly, in the swampy portions of the meadows. The trees fringing the crest of the hill show no evidence of wind. And distantly, against the seething of my pipe, I catch a bell, shaken by the cropping of one cow, yet announcing the herd. The night patiently descends, with a coexistence of sound and silence which is the quality of expectation, and thus of twilight.

Dare we, on such occasions, feel ourselves on the verge of wisdom, and melt with some kind of theoretic charity as we consider our continent passing into darkness and oceans turning cumbrously towards the sun? One's death becomes preferable to the ultimate destruction or dessication of our planet. And even the perishing of mankind seems less abhorrent than the thought that profound volumes will lie unread and symphonies be devoid of meaning. I would see all gathered into lore, the defunct vestiges of enthusiasm jealously collated, prizing what has been done against the tyranny of death. With each life the rising of a new certitude, the physical blossoming free of hesitancy, the unanswerable dogmatism of growth. Who would not call men to him — though he should feel compelled to dismiss them when they came, communion residing solely in the summons.

KENNETH BURKE

RAIN

AS the rain falls
so does
your love

bathe every
open
object of the world —

In houses
the priceless dry
rooms
of illicit love
where we live
hear the wash of the
rain —

There
paintings
and fine
metalware
woven stuffs —
all the whorishness
of our

delight

sees

RAIN

from its window
the spring wash
of your love
the falling
rain —

The trees
are become
beasts fresh risen
from
the sea —
water

trickles
from the crevices of
their hides —

So my life is spent
to keep out love
with which
she rains upon

the world

of spring

drips

so spreads

the words

far apart to let in

her love —

And running in between
the drops

the rain

is a kind physician

the rain
of her thoughts over
the ocean
every

where

walking with
invisible swift feet
over

RAIN

the helpless
waves —

Unworldly love
that has no hope
of the world

and that
cannot change the world
to its delight —

The rain
falls upon the earth
and grass and flowers
come
perfectly

into form from its
liquid

clearness

But love is
unworldly

and nothing
comes of it but love

following

and falling endlessly
from
her thoughts.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

HISTORIAN AND CRITIC OF LETTERS: A DIAGNOSIS

THE American scholar is not an expert in the field of literature. He aspires to be an expert not in literature but in literary history, and comparatively fails. He insists that the only scholarship worth having is scientific, despite the fact that scientific scholarship alone cannot enable him to understand literary history. The more facts he accumulates, and the more he seeks to control his facts through some principle of order, the more does he grow aware of a certain superficiality in his results, the more does he suspect that a certain futility is his final reward. The sense of futility that has infected the whole of contemporary thought has not spared the scholar. The cause of it, in his case, I conceive to be an inadequate conception of literary scholarship and of literary history.

Literary history, in its orthodox form, is little more than a hundred years old. It was virtually a creation of the romantic movement of the late eighteenth century, when the historical sense — the sense of historical relativity, of the otherness of all other times and places — first entered vividly into the consciousness of men. More and more, men came to think, not in the old terms of identity, permanence, and universal validity, but in the new terms of difference, of change, of origins, of development, of evolution. "The doctrine of evolution," as Josiah Royce asserted, "is in heart and essence the child of the romantic movement itself." Although the relativity of cultures had been perceived long before by St. Évremond, the first impressive vision of the evolution of cultures in time and

space was that of Herder, to whom our modern literary history owes more than to any other thinker. In the century after Herder came the definite establishment of the scientific doctrine of organic evolution, a doctrine that profoundly modified all departments of human thought, including history and literary history.

Literary history, in our present strict view of it, is an attempt to ascertain and describe the sequence of literary phenomena objectively, scientifically, without the bias of criticism. Its ultimate purpose is to present the history of literature as a whole, regardless of linguistic and national boundaries. Hence, in theory, all the literature departments of our universities coalesce in the department of comparative literature. Subordinate to this final purpose is the study of each national literature, Greek, French, German, etc. Subordinate in turn is the history of movements and periods within each national literature, of forms (such as the drama) and themes (such as the Arthurian cycle), of the works of each individual author, and finally, of each work of each author. Thus, if literary history were ever completely and finally written, we should be able to assign to every work a place of its own in an unbroken sequence, and every fact regarding every work would likewise have a local and permanent habitation. Owing to gaps in the record, to the complexity of the task, and to the frailty of human reason, this comprehensive aim can never be fulfilled, but to it the literary historian addresses himself in the hopeful spirit of the natural scientist. He regards literature as a developing organism enjoying perpetual life and containing within itself lesser organisms, the literature of nations, periods, etc., or, to begin at the other end, he seeks to establish the relation of each literary work to its environment, in the largest sense: its relation to the author's life (its personal envi-

ronment or biographic setting); its relation to other works that exerted an influence upon it; its relation to the cultural situation of the time — the social, economic, moral, religious, philosophical, and aesthetic conditions when it was written; its relation to the physical environment, natural and artistic; its relation to the peculiar spirit of the nation or race whence it issued. What remains after all these influences have been accounted for is regarded as the unique element in the work, its own special contribution, which may in turn become a new influence upon the future. Once published, the work so to speak takes its place in nature.

Thus conceived, the task of the literary historian is closely similar to that of the biologist. Both concern themselves with organisms, with heredity, with environment, with evolution. Neither of them concerns himself with worth or value; it is not for them to praise or blame, but merely to describe what happened. If the historical critic of literature may be said to have any criterion for the judgment of what is excellent and what inferior, that criterion (in theory if not always in practice) is merely success in the struggle for existence. He assumes that it is the fittest works which emerge and survive. He does not interest himself in the aesthetic qualities that defy time and place, but measures a work relatively to its own time and place. The judgment that he arrives at is purely historical, never personal or human. Unless he momentarily steps out of the rôle that he has conceived for himself, he is just as much interested in a really bad book as in a good book, provided that they are equal in representativeness and influence, and is *more* interested if, as is often the case, the bad book is superior in these respects. The law that he seeks is the law of fitness in the phenomenal order. He does not consider books under the form of eternity (*sub specie aeternitatis*), but

devotes himself to describing them in their contingent aspect. He has a single guiding (and limiting) principle, the description of literary phenomena, the interpretation of literary facts.

The importance of this task, the beneficent effect of the scientific movement in assisting us to a profounder literary history, I do not think I am disposed to underrate, since I happen myself to find literary history fascinating. Although it is not properly an end in itself, it is assuredly an indispensable means to the understanding and hence to the criticism of literature. How can we deal profitably with a literary work of the past, such as Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*, for example, unless we have learned what history can tell us as to the object of the poem, its expression of the special interests of the age in which it was written, its references to current conventions and happenings? Such study helps us to see the poem as it really is, not merely as it appears to us when we read it in an age that has quite other special interests. Literary scholarship, as well as history, has gained new powers since the time, no farther back than the eighteenth century, when, as Taine puts it, men of every race and century were supposed to be all but identical, "as if they had been turned out of a common mold."

Nevertheless, we have purchased our new powers at a very high price. Insisting, at all costs, that we must be scientific, our scholars have too often forgotten that art and science are two things, that the inwardness of art and the externality of science are essentially alien, that the services of science in the study of an art must always be merely tangential, that literary history, if it is to be other than superficial, cannot be regarded as a science. In their headlong pursuit of historical data our scholars have inclined to shift their center of inter-

est from literature to literary history, making history not a means but an end in itself. Instead of regarding time and place as obstacles to be overcome and surpassed, or disturbing factors to be eventually cancelled, they content themselves with living in other times and places. They immerse themselves in the study of environment — biographical, social, literary, and so forth — and, when they occasionally emerge from this study and from the work of other scholars of their own sort, they read the literature itself largely for its reflection of the history of its time. In all their serious activities, their research, their articles and books, their college or university instruction, they commonly proceed as if unaware that their subject is literature and that the central means of understanding literature is not historical erudition but a disciplined natural sense.

In a charming *Tatler* paper, Addison contrasts the pedantic critic with a simple young lady devoid of rules but possessed of "natural sense," much as a satirist today might contrast the pedantic professor with an untutored woman — I could name one myself — who understands literature far better and who could explain the knotty lines of a poem to the scholar helpless amid all his paraphernalia. This natural sense, this aptitude for entering intuitively into the inwardness of art, is after all the fundamental virtue of scholarship. Although it is a special gift, just as the detective power of the historical investigator is a special gift, it can unquestionably be developed and perfected. Through constant exercise, through familiarity with at least one fine art other than literature (preferably, I should say, painting or sculpture), and through increasing knowledge of life and wisdom in the art of life (life being the subject of literature), it passes into good taste and critical insight, the ultimate powers of comprehension. If

these powers are so rarely and so shabbily displayed by our professors of literature, it is mainly because they have chosen to exercise not natural sense but scientific method, which, like the rigmarole of rules in the eighteenth century, leads only too readily to that pedantry which Addison defined as "a form of knowledge without the power of it." As natural sense can be developed, so, unhappily, it can become atrophied. I need not enlarge upon the stock example, Darwin's loss of the faculty of responding to poetry; nearer examples abound among those "puissant Darwinians" who, as Stuart Sherman bitterly pointed out years ago, have the traditions of literature in their keeping. Their subject is not literature but the natural history of literature, as formerly it was not literature but linguistic philology. Instead of speaking of the Department of English Literature, for example, they might more accurately speak of the Department of English Literary History.

But this is not all. We not only tend to abandon literature in favor of literary history, we also tend to abandon literary history in favor of isolated facts. Some of our leading scholars and most of the rank and file, fearful of the broad interpretations that history properly involves, become absorbed in the safer task of mastering small groups of facts. Instead of having a due respect for facts as the necessary basis for sound knowledge and the higher activities of scholarship, they appear to worship facts as facts, things as things. Employing an expert mechanical technique, they give themselves up to a blind pursuit of facts, an aimless accumulation of small additions to the sum of knowledge. If one questions the wisdom of their procedure, they will usually justify themselves by means of what I may term a mystical faith in the *brick*. They will point out that each brick in a building is essential, and that

they and their students are collecting bricks for future builders. Whether the bricks will ever be used, whether they are the particular bricks that will be needed by future builders, does not, in their mystical faith in the brick, concern them. Their logic, if dubious, is better than their common sense. Common sense would seem to dictate that the supply of facts should not vastly outrun the demand. The fact collectors of today are like manufacturers indiscriminately producing bricks of all kinds in appalling quantities, in total disregard of the economic law of supply and demand. We must frankly admit, it is a poor way of doing business. Let us keep our common sense, our sense of proportion. Let us remember Poincaré's remark that the universe is spawning milliards of "facts" every second. Let us remember that many, yes, the majority of ascertainable facts are not worthy of being recorded. Let us remember the real danger — I trust that this is not obscurantism — that knowledge of facts will overwhelm literary scholarship and prove to be a curse. More than a quarter of a century ago Friedrich Paulsen wrote, "The springs which scientific research has opened . . . flow and flow until historian and history itself are in danger of being swallowed up in the flood" — a catastrophe that today appears more imminent than when this scholar predicted it. Even a limited field, Paulsen maintained, cannot be mastered; and we have all heard this echoed, dolefully, by various American scholars. We do not spend our days and nights reading the authors whom we profess to be concerned with, but the writings of other scholars immersed in literary history. Largely unfamiliar even with the one national literature to which we are ostensibly devoted, we are all but wholly unfamiliar with other national literatures, and seek to dignify, with the term "specialization," our obvious provincialism. Intent up-

on erudition of the German type, we do not even take time for thought. There is truth, as well as caricature, in the saying of John Stuart Mill that "The characteristic of Germany is knowledge without thought; of France, thought without knowledge; of England, neither knowledge nor thought." "Knowledge without thought," the amassing of historical data unvitalized by the deeper processes of reason and imagination, describes only too well a common mode of American scholarship that passes for real scholarship. Only rarely is a protest raised, as when Professor Stoll, in a paper read before the Modern Language Association and published in *Studies in Philology,* sums up our random scholarship by saying: "If the sources, influences, and identifications *were* demonstrated, it were something, but not very much. What a prodigious expenditure of labor, so little relevant to the real understanding of the author in question or his work! . . . To the genuine man of letters what a queer and puzzling thing the program of a Modern Language Association must be, with all its minute and extraneous considerations! The barren discussions are not only the proofs which do not prove but those which, if they do, little matter. . . . Every fact, in a sense, is important, but not every fact is relevant or congruous; and it is extremely incongruous that the higher study of literature in this country and in Europe should be so much in the hands of mere antiquarians, [whose] teaching . . . is as irrelevant and barren as their writing."

From this comparative futility many scholars have recently sought to escape by going a step farther in the wrong direction, that is, another step away from literature. Not satisfied with abandoning literature in favor of literary history, they are now abandoning literary history in favor of general history.

Literary history proper is concerned primarily with the *literary* environment of an author — the state of literary affairs at the time he was writing, his relation with predecessors and successors, the relation of his own earlier and later work. Scholars of the new type have come to feel that the merely literary environment is superficial, that to study literature in this fashion is to study it in a vacuum, and accordingly they have turned primarily to the non-literary environment — the economic tendencies, the social forces, the political trends that seem to determine, in the last analysis, the special direction of the creative efforts of authors.

Endeavoring to escape from the bogey of a vacuum by immersing themselves in general history, literary scholars of this type are in effect transferring their allegiance from the republic of letters to the republic of historiography. Here they may do, and I think are doing, useful work. But from the point of view of the republic of letters (which is our point of view here), this transfer of allegiance is an act of treason. To be sure, the term literary history is double, and looks two ways. But as greenish-blue is a color more green than blue, so literary history is a study more concerned with literature than with history. Common sense should suffice to answer the question, whether the primary object of literary history is to serve our understanding of literature or our understanding of history. Literature, indeed, should interest general historians for its revelation of moods and motives that have a correlative in outward events, and general history should interest literary scholars for its outward revelation of the inner life expressed in literature. Yet the division of labor dictates that this reciprocal interest must remain subordinate. The central concern of the historian of literature is the history of literature. He may, if he wishes, regard literary his-

tory as a branch of social history, and write, for example, such a history of American literature as Professor A. M. Schlesinger proposes, in which Emerson would be given considerably less attention than the school readers of William H. McGuffey; or he may attempt a *Kulturgeschichte* or *Geistesgeschichte*, in which the great writers represent the highest culture of the people and are viewed in relation to a significant background of non-literary expressions of the time and land, a writer like Emerson, in this case, becoming a central figure illustrative of various social, religious, and political manifestations of nineteenth-century America. Farther than this he may not go, without abandoning his field of study.

The whole tendency of our present preoccupation with history of all sorts is, however, to drive the literary scholar out of his subject. Unless he firmly envisages his own special task, he is likely to submit to this centrifugal force more and more, till he reaches the periphery and, before he is well aware of what has happened, finds himself pushed out altogether and deposited on another sphere. This is clearly the tendency of our present American scholarship. When a professor of English is awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in order to make "a study of the historical and legal literature of ancient Ireland, with special reference to Celtic parallels in the Welsh laws and historical works, and the relationships and intercourse of the early Irish with the Welsh and North-umbrian people of the island of Britain"; when candidates for the doctorate in English are permitted to write dissertations on such a subject as "Northern Travelers in the Southern States before the Civil War"; when professors of English are awarded the Pulitzer prize in History and recognized in the League of Nations list of works in History; when more and more books and dissertations are of such a nature that

they merit more attention in historical than in literary reviews and only historians are competent to pass judgment upon them, something is obviously wrong with our conception of literary scholarship. However much general historians may welcome these workers in history, literary scholars who remain faithful to their tasks can only regard them as deserters. Plainly, one of the chief needs of our scholarship today, as has recently been pointed out, is an authoritative *Laocoön* that shall resolve this confusion between history and literary history.

Another endeavor to attain profundity in literary history is driving scholars into psychology — into psychological histories of individuals and even of peoples.

Some one has suggested that the dividing line in recent German literature has been made not so much by the *Weltkrieg* as by the speculations of Dr. Freud. There are signs that the speculations of Dr. Freud will also mark a dividing line in scholarship. Outside the universities, such a line already exists: amateurs and dabblers of all sorts have made a hasty study of both psychology and literature and written biographies and criticism professedly scientific and actually buncombe. Within the universities, the idea of a sudden drop from the clear world of dates and outward events into the murky Well of the subconscious has been rather disconcerting, though a few scholars, seeking light in darkness, have timorously peered down and a very few have made the plunge and are cautiously reporting their observations. Fortunately, however, most scholars are, in this matter at least, still keeping their heads, realizing that it is futile to apply psychology to literature until the psychology proves to be other than pseudo-psychology. We have around us several new schools of psychologists, each prominent, each asserting claims, not always modest, to scientific knowledge, yet seriously conflict-

ing with each other. They are having a tough tussle with the mystery of the human mind and heart. It may well turn out to be the verdict of the future that all of them were wrong in their pretensions, that, by abandoning the traditional alliance of psychology with philosophy and limiting their research to the realm of science, they made discoveries that are true so far as they penetrate but that do not penetrate far, discoveries of certain aspects of reality that cannot be reconciled with other aspects of reality. Today, at all events, the attempt to apply the new psychology to literature is premature and treacherous and therefore journalistic rather than scholarly. The attempt may well become popular, however, because it seems to promise plausibility on very easy terms. If plausibility is least easy in an exact study like linguistic philology, it is certainly easier in literary history, still easier in general history, and easiest of all in psychological interpretation, which is nearly pure guesswork. Incidentally, it offers plausibility on very interesting terms as well, combining, as it does, the charm of lubricity with the sternness of science. But it offers no real escape to the literary scholar seeking to evade his besetting sense of superficiality.

In which direction he will turn next — whether to thyroid glands or some other explanation of literature suggested by modern science — I cannot predict. I can predict with confidence, however, that no path opened by science will ever bring him to his goal, or even lead him far on his way, and that he will eventually be driven by the very nature of things to look for help outside the realm of science. Since literature is an art, he will be driven to look more and more to philosophy for light on its content and to the other arts for light upon its form. But especially, he will be driven to seek the aid of literary criticism.

The attitude of the typical American scholar toward criticism is very curious, and deserves analysis. (I am well aware, of course, that the typical scholar does not exist as such.) His attitude is a double and conflicting one. On the one hand, he has a cynical fear of all criticism, whether it is subjective or objective, impressionistic or dogmatic. He is in the habit of contrasting the knowledge which the scholar records with the "speculation" in which the critic indulges. He has a very special horror of the dilettante, with whom he commonly identifies the critic. That is one attitude. Along with this cynical fear of criticism, however, he secretly welcomes it, and indeed himself uses it in his teaching and publication, despite his theory. Sometimes he borrows judgments from convention, from the fund of opinions in which mankind has pretty generally agreed, and sometimes he makes his own personal judgments of value, quite in the manner of the impressionist. This scarcely needs demonstration; any respected book in the field of literary history will show that it is so. The fact is that literary historians, of all types, are involved in an inner contradiction which they refuse to face. Inheriting romanticism as well as science, the typical scholar displays the familiar romantic conflict of head and heart, his head concerning itself with the solid facts of history, while his heart secretly claims its birthright to emotion, enthusiasm, and all manner of delights. The typical scholar is part scientist, part dilettante — it is only the proportion of the parts that varies from scholar to scholar. He does not object, at bottom, to impressionism, indulging in it himself and respecting the right of other sound scholars to indulge in it. In much of his life and work he is an irresponsible adventurer, living not only in the phenomenal order of science but also in the romantic disorder of Vagabondia. Both scientist and dilettante, he may be thought of as a compound

of Francis Bacon and Anatole France — a hard-boiled epicurean. If "the anarchy of impressionism," as Mr. Spingarn avers, is the modern critic's "natural reaction against the mechanical theories and jejune text-books of the professors," it is at the same time the professor's natural reaction against himself. This desire for a "compensation" has also been indicated by Emile Legouis, who observes that a Frenchman reading foreign scholarship is likely to marvel how the "worship of facts and details as such, in the raw state, is at times compensated by fits of mysticism, so that the reader has the hard soil of reality under his feet, and far above, at almost immeasurable distance, heavenly visions or absolute judgments not always visibly connected with the humble facts that gave them rise."

The time is rapidly approaching when the scholar will no longer be able to ignore the problem of standards, the problem of criticism. The deliquium of the scientific study of literature will itself remind him of the fact that, logically, criticism is both anterior and posterior to scientific knowledge. It is anterior because science owes its existence to the assumption that knowledge is a good, that truth is of value — an ethical assumption. It is posterior because science is not a final end; even if our knowledge should advance infinitely, we should still confront the problem of what to do with it. The slogan of "Knowledge for its own sake" is as empty as the slogan of "Art for its own sake." We delude ourselves if we regard science as a resting place or as the whole of life. Realizing this, many scientists — Haeckel and Huxley, for instance — have gone on beyond science in their quest of a whole view. They are right in so doing; wrong only when they attempt to transform science itself into philosophy. Thus, too, does the literary historian reveal a right instinct when he employs

standards of criticism; he is wrong only when he is a dabbler. If it is true, as the scientists tell us, that all men are in some sort poets, it is equally true, as the critics ought to tell us oftener, that all men are critics. "Criticism," said the late Mr. Brownell, "is much criticized, — which logically establishes its title." All men are critics; all scholars are critics; the only question is, are they good critics or bad critics? Cynically neglecting criticism, our scholars have pursued knowledge — to quote the words of their master Bacon, who really condemns them — "have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for ornament and reputation; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction; and most times for lucre and profession; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason, to the benefit and use of men." If the last phrase be interpreted in its best sense, I can see in this passage only rebuke of our present scholarship as prevailingly mean and idle. Not in our prevailing motives resides the advisableness of improving literary knowledge, but rather in the critical determination of the worth of literature to men, its human benefit and use. As historian, the scholar has the task of rendering our knowledge more and more exact and thorough; as critic, he has the task of rendering our standards of worth more and more conclusive and serviceable. Linguistic, textual, and historical knowledge is an indispensable preliminary to literary criticism, and literary criticism is the culmination of all literary scholarship. The scholarly writer or teacher who confines his interest to the history of literature stops at the roadside inn and never arrives.

That critical research is more difficult than scientific research must be granted. The more, then, should we refrain

from random judgments and lazy impressionism, and apply our boasted industry to the search for those constants in literature and literary theory in which reside the standards that defy the varying provincialisms of the ages of history. It was in the Alexandrian age, to which our own is similar, that the principle of "universal consent" first clearly emerged, in the treatise on the Sublime attributed to Longinus. "That is truly great," said Longinus, "which give much food for fresh reflection; which it is hard, nay impossible, to resist; of which the memory is strong and indelible. . . . When men of different habits, lives, ambitions, ages, all take one and the same view about the same writings, the verdict and pronouncement of such dissimilar individuals give a powerful assurance, beyond all gainsaying, in favor of that which they admire." We need today a number of Longinuses to redirect us to this principle of consent, this unity of memory, which runs through the ages, of that which is strong and indelible. We have now before us, as in a laboratory, a collection of art and literature immeasurably more extensive than in the time of Aristotle or of Longinus, in which the scholar may study not only those changing aspects of literature to which we have given all but exclusive attention for a century, but also those unchanging aspects which are vastly more important. Thence must come our standards, our criteria, the "laws" of literature, which, like the "laws" of nature, are simply the best hypotheses. The results of such research must be mixed, no doubt, with serious uncertainties; but so must the results of those other types of research that seek to lay bare the secret springs of works of art with the instruments of literary history, general history, and psychology. If anything, the uncertainties appear less serious in the realm of value than in the realm of science. As one of the most distinguished of American scholar-critics has recent-

ly argued, "The law of taste is the least changeable fact of human nature, less changeable than religious creeds, far less changeable than scientific theories. The advent of Christianity has left it untouched, and the waning of faith does not trouble it. The hypotheses of science — elemental spirits, antiphlogiston, corpuscular and undulatory explanations of light, atoms and ions and the continuum, catastrophism and natural selection — come and pass and come again, while the central tradition of taste is still the same." If this is even arguable, it ill becomes the historical scholar to display a cynical fear of aesthetic criticism, especially since his attitude is open to the suspicion of having its true origin, not in a reasoned view of the matter, but in that unresolved inner contradiction which I have described. It is impossible to take very seriously the opinion of a man whose head and heart appear not to belong to the same person.

If the scholar does admit that criticism is the logical completion of literary history, he is likely to go on to say: "Let the critic do what he can and I will do the same. Interests differ; my own serious interest is in literary history, which is quite enough to occupy all my time." This argument has already been sufficiently answered by the observation that every reputable historian does use second-hand or personal judgments of excellence, and thus in practice acknowledges that without such judgments scholarship would be incomplete. He must be a critic *in addition to* being an historian. But more than this, as I wish to show now, he must be a critic *in order to* be an historian.

Now, among the tasks of the historian is the determination of literary sources and influences. So long as these involve definite resemblances in diction, mechanical form, images, and ideas, the historian regards his scientific method of observa-

tion and reasoning as adequate for his purpose, but the moment he turns to indefinite resemblances in beauty, elusive resemblances in aesthetic effects and the aesthetic causes of these effects, he is aware that his usual instruments are no longer sufficient and that he must now rely upon taste. Taste is his only means of defining aesthetic qualities and showing their repetition in successive authors. It need not be purely personal and arbitrary, and indeed cannot be. We need only stop to reflect, and apply the historical method to our own taste, to perceive that this taste has antecedents, and that it illustrates Coleridge's definition of taste as "the representative and reward of our past conscious reasonings, insights, and conclusions." These have sources outside of ourselves. As Brownell remarked, "Taste indeed is essentially a matter of tradition. No one originates his own. Of the many instances in which mankind is wiser than any man it is one of the chief." The best taste, I take it, is simply that which most nearly coincides with the past conscious reasonings, insights, and conclusions of mankind. Certainly taste itself, whether good or bad, is a spontaneous form of criticism, a criticism that does not deliberate and hold the object at a distance, but operates as feeling, bringing reader and author into rapport and at the same time separating them in some degree because of an emotional judgment — a liking of this, a disliking of that aspect of the work, in accordance with the aesthetic habits that the reader has formed. Thus, if the literary historian can theoretically keep deliberate criticism out of his studies, he cannot practically dispense with taste and the criticism latent in taste. He will need taste when he desires to show, for example, to what extent the aesthetic qualities of Milton reappear in Wordsworth, or to what extent the qualities of Greek art were revitalized in the Hellenics of Landor. I think it

could be demonstrated that he will need taste, not only in dealing with aesthetic but also in dealing with intellectual, ethical, and spiritual indebtedness, since there is no beauty devoid of content and every work of art is a whole which is greater than all the parts; so that the ideal historian will render a sound and fundamental interpretation only if he occupies a central not an eccentric point of view, a truly humane philosophy. But I will not now press this extension of the argument; it is enough if we are safe in concluding that the literary historian, when dealing with aesthetic sources and influences, cannot hope to be thorough if he is "without taste" or displays "bad taste."

We are now in a position to understand why the historian attains his most striking triumphs when concerned with inferior literature. It is because his methods and instruments most nearly suffice for the explanation of such literature, while they do not suffice for the explanation of superior literature. If the success of books is in question, brief success may be accounted for by temporary and non-aesthetic causes, but protracted success issues from excellences that are largely timeless and aesthetic, and permanent success from excellences that are wholly so. In direct proportion to the excellence of the work, therefore, is the historian's need of the capacity to explain its public reception and literary influence, by means of the instruments of criticism. As it happens, this situation is the exact reverse of that of the critic, whose judgments are least secure when he is dealing with literature outside the central stream of traditional taste, and most secure when he concerns himself with the great tradition itself. Where history is weakest, criticism is strongest, and the historian needs its strength even for the accomplishment of his own task. A thoroughgoing historian must also be a critic. Though the

judgment that he aims at is historical, though he seeks to measure a work, as we have seen, relatively to its time and place, concerning himself with fitness rather than excellence and caring nothing whether a book be good or bad, the historian is bound to observe that "in any given age certain virtues are greatly admired, certain faults hardly perceived," and hence to decide what the virtues and faults of literature really are. Though he endeavors to explain rather than to praise or censure, though he is interested in the origin of aesthetic works, the causes of aesthetic results, he is bound to observe that these aesthetic results themselves become in turn causes and must therefore be understood. If the historian is not to be superficial, he must deal, after all, with virtues and faults, with the values of aesthetic results. Just as we deplore criticism unconcerned with historical knowledge, so must we deplore historical knowledge unconcerned with criticism. The place of criticism, in a word, is not only *beyond* history, it is also *within* history.

Though living like us in an age of relativity, Joubert perceived the element of truth in that old conception of the unity of men which had been cast aside by the new historical sense. "There is something unchanging in man (*quelque chose d'immuable*)," he declared, "and that is why there are unchanging rules in the arts and in works of art, beauties which will always please or modes of expression that will give pleasure only for a short time." With this "something unchanging" our scholars, whether historians or critics, will hereafter more largely concern themselves. Only by an earnest study of the unchanging can our criticism, at present mainly impressionistic, free itself from caprice and aimlessness. Only by an earnest study of the unchanging can our literary history, at present merely scientific, evade that recurrent sense of inse-

curity that is driving it, in vain, from one scientific obsession to another. Only by the integration of history and criticism, the temporary and the permanent, motion and rest, can the literary scholar really escape from the superficiality and futility that appear to crown all his labors. He need have no qualms about superficiality and futility if these labors reach all the way from external facts to permanent aesthetic qualities.

This extension of his field of study will carry him outside of science. And why not? Literature is more than science, since, unlike science, it is itself critical, itself selective and qualitative, itself concerned with human values that have no counterpart in nature; and literature can be understood only when studied with the instruments it itself employs, which are philosophical — ethical and aesthetic in vital fusion — vastly more than they are scientific. We need criticism — not a confined aesthetic or art-for-art's-sake criticism, but criticism as comprehensive in its implications as that of Aristotle — if we are to be scholars and not pedants. Modern American scholarship is in a way to becoming a veritable Polyphemus, choicely nourished on human food yet endowed with one eye only.

We must, then, set about restoring the traditional alliance of scholarship and criticism, the divorce of which has worked injury to both and havoc with education. It has made American scholarship narrowly mechanical and progressively tangential. It has encouraged an American criticism that can only be characterized as ignorant and aimlessly impressionistic, for the lamentable state of the critical journals is largely the consequence of academic failure to uphold the past as a school of judgment. And it has played a major rôle in the disintegration of American education, for it has made the study of the

humanities scientific in an age already blinded with excess of scientific light, an age that is groping in vain for such other light as literature could shed if it were rightly studied.

Postscript

From the *time* conception, the historical relativity of the scholars, no escape is provided by the impressionists, whose theory finally rests on the Protagorean doctrine that "The truth is what appears to each man at each *time*." Nor is escape provided by the small but earnest band of critics who are concerned with what their leader, Randolph Bourne, termed "a new American nationalism." Despite their scorn for the "academic" mind, the new nationalists are actually closely akin to the historical critics. Like them, they are descendants of Taine; only, they are descendants of Whitman also, and are less interested in the past than in the present and future. Instead of being researchers, they prefer being spectators or prophets. They endeavor to relate contemporary and future American literature with the "forces" that force literature into certain grooves. Though they speak of "adventure" and cry, "*Allons!* the road is before us!", they are at bottom determinists. Their adventure, indeed, is no more than sailing on a ship whose captain has secret orders. Though they speak much of "culture," superficially in the manner of Arnold, their culture is finally dependent not on the will of God or of man but on the forces of heredity, environment, evolution. Such is the drift of Lewis Mumford. Fifteen years ago Van Wyck Brooks, in *America's Coming-of-Age*, called in the plainest language (pages 104-05, 128, 163, 168-69, 179) for a definite "programme," even for "catchwords," but instead of outlining such a programme he has ever since remained spectator and prophet. Henry S. Canby, though casting a

wider than national net, has also contented himself with observing and defining "forces" and "tendencies," with the play of which he is loth to interfere. The very latest of these tendencies, however, is a desire humanely to dominate the temporal flow of things and thought, and this is why the humanists, who do have a programme, are now winning the ear of intellectuals old and young. The latest tendency therefore gives some ground for hope that in another generation we shall be less absorbed in tendencies. When that time arrives we shall be able to restore in the American university the alliance of scholarship and criticism, or, in the words of Emile Legouis, the alliance of the two types of criticism — the erudite and the literary.

NORMAN FOERSTER

BOOK REVIEWS

CYCLES IN POETRY

THE CYCLE OF MODERN POETRY. *A Series of Essays Toward Clearing our Present Poetic Dilemma. By G. R. Elliott. Princeton. Princeton University Press.* 1929. $2.50.

Matthew Arnold once said "the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety." Mr. T. S. Eliot, reminding us of this statement, remarked that it would probably be as true of the first quarter of the twentieth century as of the nineteenth. Professor G. R. Elliott, whether intentionally or not, has written a book which may stand as a demonstration of these *dicta*. In a series of essays dealing with Shelley, Keats, Byron, Arnold as a poet, Longfellow, Browning, Whitman (as contrasted with Longfellow and compared with Browning) and Hardy he has analyzed the thought and motive ideas of nineteenth-century poetry. In two concluding essays, one on Robert Frost, the other entitled "Milton and the Present State of Poetry," he has treated twentieth-century poetry as a completion of the cycle that started with Wordsworth, and he has pointed to a possible way out of what he considers the present poetic *impasse*.

It would be well to note the limitations which Professor Elliott has imposed upon himself. His book has no point of contact, for example, with the recent book by Professor Grierson which treats of the same period. Professor Elliott is not interested in the sensibility, the diction, the "form" of nineteenth-century poetry. He invests the word "poetry" with a high seriousness, stripping it of what he would consider mere "aesthetic" connotations. His book is slightly parallel to chapters IV and VI of Mr. Herbert Read's *Phases of Poetry*. But again Professor Elliott's attention is focussed upon a narrower field. He is interested almost exclusively in the ethical implications of a

poet's work, in the "moral imagination" of a poet, and what he reports of the struggle in life between good and evil.

In the essays upon individual poets there is much that is pleasant and instructive. The analysis of the quality of Shelley's emotion is felicitous and precise. A very convincing graph is plotted of Keats's intellectual growth, and the essay should do much to check the still growing nonsense (witness the review in the *Times Literary Supplement* for April 18 of M. Lucien Wolff's book on Keats) about Keats, the "philosopher." There is a just appreciation of Hardy's *Dynasts,* which, as Professor Elliott complains, is too much neglected for his slighter lyrics. The essay upon Robert Frost fits that idiosyncratic poet accurately into the frame of contemporary poetry. But the essay which most commands one reader's admiration is the one on Longfellow. It is not too much to say that Professor Elliott completely demolishes the Longfellow myth. By apt quotation and by a right insistence upon Longfellow as a necessary complement to Whitman in the growth of the American spirit he shows that Longfellow has been the most serious American poet and the one whose successful accomplishments in handling such themes as home or death make him most worthy of our attention.

It is perhaps unjust to Professor Elliott to pass thus hastily over what is the larger part of his book and in which there is so much both to please and to instruct, in order to concentrate upon the final chapter where one finds material for disagreement. Yet the chapter on "Milton and the Present State of Poetry" is intended by him as the most important section of the book, and the validity of the conclusions there reached must determine in great measure the validity of the general thesis which informs the entire work.

Subscription to that thesis in its large extent is easy and compulsory. The poetic mind of our day is "still caught in the dying orbit of the nineteenth century mind." The ideas and formative thought of Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, and the imagists are bequests from Wordsworth, Shelley and the 'nineties. The most serious — the fatal — legacy is the monism of Romantic ethical thought. The consequent flabbiness of our moral imagination prevents our attaining "that central region of the Elizabethan dramatic imagination," the region in which one records the struggle between good and evil. Professor Elliott's philosophy is very similar to the humanism of Professors

Babbitt and More, and it would be correct to say that the great service of his book is the application of that doctrine to nineteenth-century poetry. One of the reasons for our dissatisfaction with that poetry is at last well defined and documented. The mere fact that these essays form a single book gives them greater value than that of the fragments scattered through volumes of Shelburne essays.

Formally this book might have been better if a prefatory essay upon Wordsworth expounding the tenets of the doctrine to be set forth had been used as an introduction, instead of that poet receiving only a sub-heading in the final chapter. Such an essay might have led the author to examine one aspect of Wordsworth's thought to which he pays no attention, the aspect shown in the patriotic sonnets. It might be a tenable theory that the successors of Wordsworth suffered most, not from their devotion to that poet, but from the fact that that devotion was to an incomplete Wordsworth. Furthermore Professor Elliott handles his modern poets rather gingerly and in such a way as to provoke a lack of confidence in his full acquaintance with them. Imagism receives some attention, and a dead horse is well flogged. But the other poets he mentions, Masefield, Lindsay, Lola Ridge, W. W. Gibson, have little or no interest to the student of modern poetry. One wishes that he had chosen for analysis and comment work of more significance, the poetry of Hart Crane, for example, or *The Waste Land.*

With these minor fault-findings one can accept Professor Elliott's thesis, considered as analysis. It is open to anyone to object that the book should be entitled "The Cycle of Ethical Thought in Modern Poetry" and that a fairer judgment of these poets would be obtained by viewing them in a context other than the moral one, but such objections are completely beside the point. The application of the humanist touchstone to these poets was something that had to be done and that application has demonstrated what we had begun to suspect: that the quality of the moral imagination in the successors of Wordsworth is very low.

It is when Professor Elliott prescribes a remedy that disagreement commences. If it were simply a question of what classic poet should be read by young poets the quarrel would be silly. But the extraordinarily high praise awarded to Milton, as the sole English poet whose spirit is capable of saving the modern poetic mind, leads one to

think that Professor Elliott has misconceived Milton and, what is most important, has a confused and inadequate theory of the spiritual needs of our civilization.

Confused, because there would appear to be a discrepancy between the religion which animates *Paradise Lost* and the humanism which Professor Elliott has invoked as a guide for his analysis of recent poetry. This discrepancy which is probably real as well as apparent is nowhere investigated. Professor Elliott is perhaps not "irrevocably committed to the modern experiment," but we have a right to inquire what the religion is which we are being urged to adopt. In the whole effect of *Paradise Lost* the ethical insight of Milton cannot be dissociated from his religious premises. Milton was writing, not a moral drama, but a religious poem, to justify the ways of God to man. If we are to regard it merely as a "symbolical epic" will we not lose what is the moving power and the very foundation of the moral imagination of Milton, a set of beliefs about God?

It may be that morality is impossible without religion. If that is so, we must cease to be humanists, in the sense in which Professor Babbitt uses the word. The religion that will be ours in that case can hardly be the harsh and unlovely Protestantism of Milton. We might accept Professor Elliott's enthusiastic praise of Milton's ethical discernment in terms usually reserved for Sophocles, but it is impossible to accept a statement such as this: "That power [which is] the foundation of what is greatest in English and American literature, and deserving the full homage of our *imagination*, is called Puritanism." One has no desire to run at this word like a bull at a red flag, as Mr. Mencken does, but surely the religion and morality of Puritanism are amply discredited by their fruits. One need not mention obvious things like Cromwell's army of murderers; it is more interesting to note that a recent historian discovers in the religion of the Commonwealth an ancestor of pernicious modern rationalism. Mr. Esmé Wingfield-Stratford's description of what he terms the "spiritual bolshevism" of the Puritan era makes one skeptical of help coming from that quarter. Although Professor Elliott selects for special commendation that element of *Paradise Lost* which is least characteristic of its time, the figure of the Son of God, he does not convince us that the Messiah is the protagonist of the poem. The God the Father whom Professor Elliott wisely ignores is all too prominent when one

reads the poem itself. Milton's religion is implicated in his morality and prevents that morality from being the vital inspiration to the present age that Professor Elliott would have it be, no matter how serious our desire for moral guidance is.

It is precisely our moral seriousness which makes us reject Milton's moral insight as inadequate. There is a solemnity about the struggle between Satan and the helpers of God. But there is also "a dazzling disregard of the human soul," as a recent critic has noted. The contest is symbolical, perhaps, but symbolical and non-human. The fighting forces become abstractions, labels, having relations to humanity only in the eyes of sectarians. The revivified moral imagination of the modern poet will come not from Milton, but from a study of the more serious Shakespeare, whom Professor Elliott rejects, or of the metaphysical poets, whom he so unaccountably finds "poetically turgid." Their moral insight is more serious than Milton's because it is more studious of human beings and because it was founded upon a religion that embodied a sweeter and older tradition. In any case the arrogance and haughty pride of a Milton are not the products of the sweet reasonableness that one expects of the humanist.

One suspects that this question of the proper "curriculum" for the modern poet is not to be solved solely by an examination of the moral qualities of past writings. If one is convinced that somehow or other the magical word "humanism" is to solve such difficulties one must be careful lest new humanism be old Puritanism (or old Victorianism) writ large. One feels like insisting that there are other traditions embodied in English literature besides that of Puritanism, traditions which incorporate as great or greater moral imagination, traditions such as Catholicism, or, what could not be precisely termed tradition, manifestations of Primitive Christianity. Or it is possible to wear one's Puritanism with a difference as Spenser did, whose poetry is perhaps most worthy to be entitled humanist. Surely Professor Elliott is correct in saying that contemporary poetry suffers from an exclusive attention to romantic thought; but equally surely the corrective is opposition, almost in any form, creating the clash of traditions from which comes culture. The poetry of manners and enlightenment of the eighteenth century with which Professor Elliott has no sympathy would serve better than Milton. Whatever one's conclusion, however, one is grateful to Professor Elliott for his careful exposition of one of the sources of the errors that infect our poetry.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

THE POETRY OF MALCOLM COWLEY

BLUE JUNIATA. *By Malcolm Cowley. New York. Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith.* $2.00.

This book covers a period of something more than ten years, and its less successful poems might serve as an outline history of the fashions that have risen and fallen during that period. This is not to its credit. For the styles so adopted have been in nearly every case adopted from the outside with little or no awareness of their organic causes, and they have seldom been mastered. The earliest poems are Laforguian: *Nocturne,* for instance, is almost a paraphrase of Laforgue's *Complainte des Pianos*; it embodies the decidedly unsatisfactory adolescent emotion that is the basis of all of Laforgue's work but not the two great Laforguian virtues of style — speed and rhythmic outline. The *Complainte des Pianos* has the dazzling rapidity of a first-rate xylophone performance: *Nocturne* is slow and limp. *Deathbed,* however, a poem of about the same time, escapes the influences of the period and offers a very curious and well-handled emotion. If the first nineteen lines of *Angelica* could be condensed into two or three, one would have another poem nearly as good. The poem does not get started until the twentieth line; from there on it has form and precision; but before that point it is vague, aimless, and reminiscent of that Laforguian pastiche of Mr. Eliot's, *A Portrait of a Lady.*

Mr. Cowley, having drifted through the Dada days of *Broom,* with a few interesting experiments and a few sound lines, seems to have returned to his native countryside for inspiration, and we have as a result the first section in the book, though some of these poems antedate the rest by several years. The group has a charming feeling as a whole, interesting passages, and perhaps three poems — *The Hill above the Mine, Chestnut Ridge,* and *Laurel Mountain* — that are successful throughout. They share one quality with the more or less similarly sentimental poetry of Francis Jammes: the group as a whole is more moving than any of its parts, the reason being a kind

of stylistic dilution of an emotion that is nevertheless quite genuine of its kind, so that the poetry never permits of very close scrutiny at any given point. Mr. Cowley allows himself, for instance, many such unorganized catalogues and progressions as the following:

> only the bones of a house,
> lilacs growing beside them,
> roses in clumps between them,
> honeysuckle over;
> a door, a crooked chimney,
> mud-chinked, a yawning fireplace,
> the skeleton of a pine.

That he is capable of firmer writing is proved by the graceful synthesis that follows:

> I heard a railroad section hand playing on a jew's-harp,
> *Where is now that merry party I remember long ago?*
> *Nelly was a lady* . . . twice . . . *Old Black Joe,*
> as if he laid a hand upon my shoulder,
> saying:
> "Your father lived here long ago;
> your father's father built the house, lies buried
> under the pine —"
> Sing *Nelly was a lady*
> *Blue Juniata* . . . *Old Black Joe.*

This passage, incidentally, is probably the taking-off point for a similar passage in *The River*, by Hart Crane.

The more recent poems are for me the most interesting and deserve less reserved praise. *Leonora* is adroit and amusing to a high degree, and *Tumbling Mustard*, the perfection, perhaps, of the same mood, is one of the lovliest, most amusing, and most skillful songs of our time. The meter, especially in the fifth line of each stanza, is astonishingly fine and astonishingly witty. In one of the more serious poems there is this slightly vague grandiloquence by way of a final statement:

> But you shall hear the thunder
> of bursting walls; the gates of night swing wide,
> and journeys will be set against the sunrise;
> your path shall be the empty streets of air.

This is an apparently satisfactory answer to a man who is "waiting without patience to be filled with God." The last stanza of *Tumbling Mustard* says the same thing but evaluates its content more accurately:

Tumbleweed, tumbleweed,
riding his velocipede
east side, west side,
all around the moon;
Denver, San Francisco, Winnipeg and Dallas, maybe if
the gas holds out we'll get there soon.

This piece might easily pass for a poetic summary of the first three-fourths of Mr. Cowley's career as one has it in the present volume.

In addition, *There Is a Moment* is perfectly written and wholly admirable; *William Wilson* is firm and closely organized; and *The Lady from Harlem* is perhaps better than any of these. It is mainly in these poems and in *Deathbed* that the author is endeavoring to study and master himself; elsewhere he too often seems to be seeking some vague salvation in an attempt to reflect his age, or something else, occasionally Laforgue and Eliot; or, as a sort of nostalgic but apparently no better justified alternative, his section of Pennsylvania. He is, on the strength of these, one of the eight or ten most distinguished poets of his generation; he might become, proceeding from these, something more. I quote *The Lady from Harlem* (In Memory of Florence Mills) entire:

The fetish-woman crossed the stage,
her limbs convulsed with yellow magic.
Art is the gratuitous
shiver that makes the shimmy tragic.
Obeah, obeah, wailed the saxophones.

Though orchestras play Dixie Dreams,
never in Dixie field was picked
the gun-cotton that swells your breast,
explodes and leaves me derelict
amid the wreckage of your smile,

floating over the parterre.
Your sudden fingers touched my wrist.
Tell me, did Madam Walker do your hair
before she died in Tarrytown
among her butlers, footmen, chefs?

Throned on a tomb of brass you reign
between the bass and treble clefs.

This is finely felt and closely written; it is an organic, not a sought and theoretically correct emotion. It is to be hoped that its author is aware of its virtues, relative as well as absolute.

YVOR WINTERS

THREE REFORMERS

THREE REFORMERS: LUTHER, DESCARTES, ROUSSEAU. *By Jacques Maritain. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.50.

This book is an analysis of the "great wild revolutionary work, from Protestantism downwards," which has prepared "nonsense pure and simple as its blessedest result." Its purpose is to vindicate the claim of the New Scholasticism that the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas "does not wish to be the philosophy of a historical age, but rather the constantly progressive philosophy of humanity, and that it is for this reason that it is traditional."

Luther is taken as "the prototype of modern times." He is studied primarily not as the founder of a new institution, but as "the first great Romantic." In Luther's personal history is found the "ébauche" of the whole disastrous Protestant apostasy. As a "religious" he worked madly for perfection, but being unable to experience pureness of grace he decided that God commanded the impossible when he gave us His law. Instead of losing himself in God and partaking of the divine personality, he went spiritually bankrupt and announced that "concupiscence is unconquerable." (M. Maritain interprets concupiscence as physical lust, although Luther meant it to apply to every kind of temptation toward selfish desire.) For the supersensuous insight of the contemplative life and its resulting virtues, he substituted the *consolations sensibles*, a phrase which the translator erroneously renders "sensible consolations" — that is, the *feeling* that he was in a state of grace and sinlessness. His was a mystical heresy in which the feelings were primary. Works (by which Luther meant both ethical and ritualistic works) are futile. Faith alone must suffice.

Along with this "solifidianism," to use Matthew Arnold's term, went a bold attack on reason. Where reason is debased, and where faith is against reason, the will becomes supreme. For Luther, this meant determinism in theory, but in practice, the man (Luther) whose piety is a feeling of sinlessness, though he goes on sinning, as a human creature "raises its crest and manages very well in the mud

in which it was plunged by Adam's sin. This creature will get straight in the world, it will follow the will to power, the imperialistic instinct, it will work *its will* in the world." The last stage of such a progression is the principle of immanence. Liberty, grace, inwardness, spirit are turned into illusions. Liberty which should bring man peace through delight in the law of virtue puts him under bondage to his own sensations and desires. Grace, instead of transforming his character, simply changes the red figures in the celestial ledgers to black figures. Luther's sins are laid on Christ and Christ's virtues are accredited to Luther. Thus, resigning himself to his "unconquerable concupiscence" and "sinning on bravely,"[1] though riding on Christ's back in faith, he gradually becomes a vicious "riot in flesh and blood." And this was the "reformation"! The "Christ in us" of Luther's theology is in reality only a theory and a feeling. Evidence of this is furnished, with chapter and verse, for Protestants who may be sceptical. The effect of heresy upon his personal features is shown by a series of portraits, included in the volume, "the last of which are surprisingly bestial." "The Protestant reformation was only the effect of an interior trial which turned out badly in a 'religious' who lacked humility."

Under state control the spirit of Luther is quickly suppressed in Germany, but it "takes the offensive again in Lessing and it carries all before it with Rousseau." Whether it was Luther's obscurantism, his determinism, his principle of immanence, or his personal viciousness, that was revived by Lessing is not pointed out. Perhaps we need not be told that it was Lessing's assertion of the right of private judgment and reason. In that case, he would hardly be a disciple of Luther. The fact is, the principle which Luther has come to represent was not one championed as such by him, namely, refusal to accept uncritically the dictates of authority.

J. Maritain has shown with great skill, the "Lutheranism" of Jean Jacques! Rousseau's reform accomplished a work in the sphere of natural morality of the same type as Luther's in the realm of grace. At first glance, the theory of natural goodness would seem to be the exact opposite of Luther's assertion of irresistible concupiscence but as a matter of practice they both yield to the flesh. Luther looks to Jesus as the author and finisher of his good works and as the scape-

[1] "*Pecca fortiter et crede firmius,*" a phrase used by Luther in a letter to Melanchthon.

goat for his bad works. Rousseau blames society for his vices and accepts his temperament as God-given. They both "sin on bravely," Luther because his "concupiscence is unconquerable," Rousseau because he must be sincerely himself. Keep your mind and feelings on Christ and "everything happens of itself and everything you do is good," says Luther. Rousseau resists no allurement, but surrenders to his natural propensities with his eyes ever on the ideal. "The Milesians are not really stupid people; they only act like stupid people." These two reformers according to M. Maritain, through the intoxication of feelings about themselves make the philosophy of drift seem to be true sanctity. He has forgotten, however, that Luther depreciated human nature in order to exalt God and that for Luther good works are the inevitable result and the sign of true faith. He does, however, admit (and fail to explain why) the Lutherans have been the most puritanical of the Protestant sects. Nevertheless, he finds in both Reformers, in equal measure, anti-intellectualism, hypocrisy, loss of humility and grace which transforms life, the principle of immanence, the absorption of God into the self, identification of the divine with the individual's feelings and will, reliance upon an emotional conscience, and as a result, the restlessness of disintegrated personality and of a salvation attempted without work, and, most of all, sensuality.

Agreeing with M. Seillière, but following more closely the Jesuit, Hartmann Grisar, the author accuses Rousseau of debasing Christianity, a laicising of mysticism, partially through the influence of Mme. de Warens, who is therefore called the "mamma" of Romanticism, a title she has hardly won. The real sin of Jean Jacques, says M. Maritain, was the "mimicry of sanctity" and the cause of his success and influence (and of Luther's) was the way in which, under the guise of a saint, he confused or debased the key words or concepts of the moral and spiritual vocabulary: nature, mysticism, solitude, faith, sincerity, conscience, confession, grace, liberty, equality. Generally speaking, although there are many sound distinctions to be found in connection with the meanings of these general terms, especially of solitude, mysticism and nature, any reader of Irving Babbitt or Paul Elmer More will find little that is new.

The Descartes essay is brilliant and the best in the book. As Luther discovered the Human Person and Jean Jacques Nature and Liberty,

Descartes discovered Thought. His sin is "angelism," a term which deserves a popularity equal to Benda's "Belphegorism." An "angelist" is one who simulates the power of direct intuition, independent of things, a power which belongs only to the angels. "Angelic cognition is intuitive as to its mode, innate as to its origin, and independent of things as to its nature." Descartes' first effort is to throw off the burden of discursive reasoning and to achieve vision by direct method. Interior conviction is the criterion of truth; hence, judgment belongs ultimately to the will and not to the understanding. Error arises from the same cause as the fall of the angels, pride of intellect and precipitancy of judgment. It is a weakness of the free will and a judging beyond what is perceived clearly and distinctly. Thus Descartes pulls down the blinds, shuts out external objects and fabricates a structure of clear ideas almost instantaneously. He needs neither the help of others nor concrete forms, for he believes his ideas come from God like angelic ideas and not from objects. By a theory of representation and of divine integrity, thought and being are identified, all knowledge is levelled to a single type of certitude and finally the judgment of other men, the heritage of the past, unclear and indistinct ideas, poetry and everything that is not mathematically evident are excluded. Actually, then, Descartes separates rather than identifies thought and being. The angel incarnate has descended to subhuman cognition. The humanities, positive and moral studies, history and erudition are held in contempt. Thence arises the obsession for method, the domination of the physical universe becomes the soul's good, and "the mechanical explanation becomes the only conceivable scientific explanation."

One might wish that the author had dealt more in detail with the Cartesian concept of substance as an aspect of "angelism." All in all, the essay is one of the briefest, and yet one of the most comprehensive of recent studies of Descartes, an essay worthy of many rereadings.

And yet, the reason, perhaps, for the superiority of the Descartes essay may be that in the other studies M. Maritain is himself an "angelist." Besides the limitation of his method, a limitation which is unavoidable if one would write history and translate it into ideas,[2]

[2] As E. Gilson remarks, the danger of M. Maritain's method of dealing with the history of thought is that "*sous sa main, les philosophes deviennent des thèses abstraites. . . . Cette manière de voir n'est pas sans présenter quelques incon-*

the author has the overweening fervor of a convert to *the* Faith and *the* Philosophy which he believes to be the only remedy for a world gone astray. In the interpretation of Luther as a transmitter of obscurantism, voluntarism, immanence and charity corrupted into humanitarianism, M. Maritain has much that is sound and worthy of repetition. But in his treatment of Luther as a man and a Protestant he has descended to a type of muck-raking that many Catholics will resent. Since he felt it necessary to deal with controversial biographical material, it is to be regretted that he did not draw his information and interpretations from historians like Janssen and Pastor, who, though "defenders of the Faith," do not believe that the Catholic Church has come to such a pass as to need calumny. Maritain, the "angelist," has allowed his stock of clear and distinct ideas, no doubt also from God, to furnish him with an erroneous theory of the cause of Luther's apostasy, and likewise of the Reformation, for the confirmation of which isolated facts, well-attested to be sure, suggestions and portraits are marshalled together to prove that the Reformer "gathered sensuality everywhere" and was a "bestial," "vicious disposition." There are three main theses which have separated M. Maritain from the facts, one derived from the Dominican Friar, Heinrich Denifle,[3] and the other two from the Jesuit Professor at Innsbruck, Hartmann Grisar.[4] From Denifle, he takes, beside most of his facts, the general principle of the Inquisition, "that no one has ever become a recreant to the true faith unless he had previously become a wicked man. Every departure from the doctrine of the one holy and apostolic Church must be traceable to some mental or moral depravity on the part of the erring person." From Grisar, he appropriates two explanations of Luther and Lutheranism: first, Luther's "ever-increasing, uncontrollable self-concern, developing as time went on into a fatal self-assertion, a contempt of all authority except such as he could turn to the support of his own individual con-

vénients, car en fait les penseurs soumis à une telle critique ne reconnaîtraient jamais leur pensée sous la forme schématique à laquelle elle se trouve réduite et ceux qui lisent ces mêmes penseurs ne la reconnaissent pas davantage." F. Lefevre, *Une heure avec . . .*, p. 71.

[3] *Luther und Lutherthum in der ersten Entwickelung*, von P. Heinrich Denifle, O. P., 1904-1909.

[4] *Luther*, von Hartmann Grisar, S. J., 3 Bde. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1911.

clusions. Having through his own perversity come to certain conclusions, he then found, or wished others to think he had found, support in the undoubted foundations of Christian tradition;" second, Luther's "Morbid sensitiveness to imagined spiritual suggestion," "a false mysticism which overemphasizes the individual process of reaching religious satisfaction through personal, spiritual communion with the source of all spiritual certainty." The justice of these three theses cannot be entered into here.[5] The English historian G. P. Gooch has described Denifle's book, which is quoted at great length by M. Maritain, as "eight hundred pages hurled at the memory of the Reformer, and among the most repulsive books in historical literature."

As to the pictures of the "surprisingly bestial" Luther, found in this volume: no other reason but malice can be adduced to explain the selection of the loathsome portrait "Luther Dead" by Lucas Fortnagel instead of the picture painted by Lucas Cranach in the year Luther died. In fact, it is only the Fortnagel portrait which warrants the phrase "surprisingly bestial."

Moreover, M. Maritain's "angelism" has made him silent, not blind, as to the material causality (to use one of his favorite phrases) of the Reformation. Even Mr. Chesterton admits that no man knows enough to be always wrong. Luther found a Church which was carrying on a profitable business of relic-worship, masses for the dead, miracles, pilgrimages and indulgences.[6] He found also a theology which was the blessed result of scholasticism. The former he succeeded in abolishing, that is, for Protestantism. As to the latter, he simply came down on the other side of the horse.

But misinterpretations of certain aspects of Luther's life must not be cause for underestimating this important book. It is written by a great philosopher and an artist, a man who has seen deep into the darkness visible of modern individualism. The problem that has been bequeathed to us by the three Reformers is not one that "Martinus Eleutherius" would have dealt with as a "modern," but it is one that was inevitable since the Catholic Church was a divine institution

[5] For a discussion of the flood of literature brough forth by Denifle and Grisar see *Harvard Theological Review*, April, 1914, vol. vii, No. 2, page 203, Ephraim Emerton, *Martin Luther in the Light of Recent Criticism.*

[6] Denifle describes the corrupt conditions existing within the Church in great detail in order to show the decadence of mind and soul which Luther typifies.

under human control. M. Maritain reminds us that the problem of liberty is the chief problem of humanity, and, incidentally, of his book. He offers as the solution the "intelligence" and love and truth, and a willingness to learn from others, which being translated means, besides other things, St. Thomas and the Catholic Church, which is no solution at all except for the "antimodern." "Only in the Church is Christianity a living thing." Certainly the "modern" must discover and impose upon himself a standard less fluctuating and "angelistic" than his reason or his feelings about himself, whether he be a humanist or a religious man or both. But he cannot admit that sound autonomy is heteronomy.

The translation is adequate, although it does not follow the original faithfully throughout.

JAMES LUTHER ADAMS

THE EXTASIE

DONNE THE CRAFTSMAN. *An essay upon the structure of the* Songs and Sonets. *By Pierre Legouis. Paris. Henri Didier.* 1928. (*New York. Oxford University Press.* 1929. $1.00.)

"I propose," says M. Legouis (pp. 10, 11), "to insist on one aspect of Donne's talent which seems to have been overlooked or at least insufficiently recognized. More than justice has been done to his earnestness on the one hand, to his extensive and thorough acquaintance with medieval philosophy on the other hand, but the transmutation of both personal experience and recondite learning into lyrical poetry has not been paid its due share of attention. . . . Is it possible, without going back to classical standards, to test the poetry of Donne, neither as an outburst of feeling nor as a produce [*sic*] of the intellect that deals in abstractions (both of which it undoubtedly is), but for the nonce merely as the work of a gifted, restless, unequal, yet highly conscious craftsman? . . . Aim, purpose, intention is what I am primarily concerned with, though I may pass judgments, secondarily, on the quality of the art, or craftsmanship, or technique, three words which I shall not distinguish." This admirable purpose M. Legouis carries out by an examination of the *Songs and Sonets* in three categories.

First, he studies Donne's use of stanza forms. After enumerating in a convenient table (pp. 14 to 16) the stanzas employed in the *Songs and Sonets*, and commenting on the technical difficulties imposed by their complicated pattern, he attempts an analysis of the success with which Donne is able to reproduce this pattern in the stanzas that follow. This analysis leads to the conclusion that "In many, if not in most, of the *Songs and Sonets*, an initial outburst of feeling soon subsides into dialectics, a change which I ascribe to the difficulty of reproducing deliberately the complex arrangement of a spontaneous first stanza." (p. 33.) Donne's poetry, considered thus, "parades its freedom from tradition up to a certain point chiefly to enhance the value of its strict subjugation afterwards to its own new-made laws. When it seems to have given itself most rope, it proves to have tied itself tightest." (p. 34.)

Second, he studies the matter of the poems, in contradistinction to the metrical form. By analyzing several poems, he demonstrates how strictly Donne has disciplined his thought. These analyses lead to the conclusions "that there is a close relation between the artistic structure and the logical import of his lyrics, and that form not seldom seems to command matter." (pp. 46, 47.)

Third, to confute the objections "that such form is logical rather than artistic, and that Donne is more of a schoolman than a poet when he delights in symmetrical constructions" (p. 47), M. Legouis proceeds to show that "in several at least of the *Songs and Sonets*, logic is subordinate to another element which I shall call the dramatic" (p. 47), defining the term as implying the presence of a second character. When the "effect produced on the speaking character by the presence of a listening one, whom he tries to persuade and win over" (p. 50) is considered, "What seemed at first disinterested dialectics, indulged in for truth's sake, . . . sounds quite differently . . ." (p. 50). To the support of this contention he adduces the four *Valedictions*, — *of my name, in the window*, — *of the booke*, — *of weeping*, and — *forbiding mourning*; other similar poems, *Sweetest love I do not goe, Breake of day, The Sunne Rising, The good-morrow*; and finally analyzes in more detail *The Canonization, The Exstasie, The Flea* and *The Dreame*. The section closes with a comparison, more extended than Professor Grierson's, to Browning's dramatic poems.

As a conclusion to his study as a whole, M. Legouis asserts that "Donne cared for art, or, to put it more unexceptionably, he was interested in technique. His life, at least his youth during which he wrote the most of the *Songs and Sonets*, was wild, whether we consider the lover or the thinker in him; but when he set to indite a love-poem, or vent in verse a theory on the problems of sexual morality, he composed himself and looked about for literary devices to improve his theme; or, if the first stanza of a piece shaped itself while his blood was still hot, he had to cool down before he proceeded to copy its metrical design accurately in the second and third stanzas." (p. 80.)

M. Legouis agrees with Professor Grierson in guarding against "the literalism that sees 'an actual experience behind every sincere poem.'" (p. 80.) But he cannot agree with Professor Grierson in

believing that one may discover in any group of Donne's poems his philosophy of complete love (see Professor Grierson's edition, Vol. II, p. xlv). "This essay tries to show that what earnestness there is in *The Songs and Sonets* often belongs, not to the poet himself, but to the character he presents, and to the situation in which he places this character." (p. 82.)

Particularly startling to most readers will be M. Legouis's interpretation of *The Exstasie* as built about a "seducer's scheme." (p. 67.) ". . . in not a few of the *Songs and Sonets* the barrister pleads disingenuously indeed, but earnestly enough, because he pleads for himself, not before an academic jury of literary connoisseurs, but with the one woman whom he loves for the nonce. Persuading her to yield is the practical reason which decides upon the lover's choice of arguments and manner of presenting them." (pp. 71, 72.) Accordingly, in *The Exstasie* Donne leads from the description of the pregnant bank ("The epithet 'pregnant', though not voluptuous, is also sexual, and the drooping violets suggest languor." p. 62) and from the hands "firmly cimented / With a fast balme, which thence did spring" (M. Legouis, p. 62, compares Othello's "young and sweating devil"), through the meeting of two souls in Platonic purity, through subtle flattery and analogy, to "the point and says what he has been thinking all the time,

> But O alas, so long, so farre
> Our bodies why doe wee forbeare?" (p. 66.)

The hypothetical listener bears witness to "the ennobling quality of the scene." (p. 63.) The conclusion is triumphantly cynical. ". . . the final line of the second part repeats, with some variation, the last line of the first part: 'no change' becomes 'small change,' the difference between the two terms representing what the man has won and the woman lost." (p. 68.)

It is perhaps this last rendering which is among several others[1] most open to question. To the true-born Englishman to whom M. Legouis

[1] Is it not possible to discover a solution for the difficulty M. Legouis finds (pp. 65, 66) between "But as all severall soules containe / Mixture of things, they know not what," and "For th' Atomies of which we grow, / Are soules, . "? Again, is there a significance in the use of *we* which M. Legouis's interpretation does not utilize? I raise both questions without being able to answer them satisfactorily. Neither of them challenges his interpretation, but concerns the course of the argument only.

elsewhere (p. 88, note) defers, "small change" presents a negation if anything more emphatic than "no change." This more likely rendering, however, does no injury to M. Legouis's interpretation.

Despite such minor weaknesses, which only captious criticism would make important, M. Legouis's interpretation, startling as it may be, must, nevertheless, be acknowledged plausible. Indeed, one of its most startling features is the revelation of how suspiciously subjective one's reasons are for regarding the poem as an attempt "to state and vindicate the relation of soul and body." (Grierson, ed., Vol. II, xlvii.) Every objective argument in favor of this latter interpretation serves quite as well, or even better, in support of M. Legouis's.

By his demonstration of the dramatic element in many of Donne's *Songs and Sonets*, M. Legouis has exposed the unwarranted assumptions by which a romantic criticism, unfortunately still in vogue, has sought to connect the poem and the poet. This book does much to place the study of Donne's poetry on a firmer basis. Certainly no critic can in the future neglect its findings.

M. Legouis's study concludes with two appendices. The first considers the application of Gray's comment that "Dr. Donne (in his *Satires*) observes no regularity in the feet of his verse, only the number of syllables is equal throughout." The second appendix advances cogent arguments against Professor Grierson's conjecture that certain poems were written to Mrs. Herbert.

M. Legouis's publishers might well have done him the honor of printing his valuable study in some form less slovenly than the present volume.

JOHN MARSHALL

SHORTER NOTICES

No Love. *By David Garnett. New York. Alfred A. Knopf.* 1929. $2.50.

If we take it as granted that Mr. Garnett's prose is pleasant both to the ear and the mind and that he employs in this, his latest novel, the same welcome talent for avoiding waste places that freshened his earlier books, there remains still an interesting enough matter for mention: what *kind* of a novel has he written? What *kind* of a content has it?

No Love is not, for example, very like anything by Henry James. The novels James worked most on were often intended to show the awakening of some single character to the nature and conditions of his or her own life: so with Strether in *The Ambassadors*, and so with Isabelle Archer in *The Portrait of A Lady*. The predicament of character was fatal and the solution was secured when the "sacred rage" of consciousness made that fate manifest. The exposition of such an awakening formed what Ramon Fernandez would call the moral progress of the novel; and it consisted, finally, in the integration of a character. I do not mean that James painfully manufactured people of integrity — who very frequently are not integrated at all. It is not a question of totalled virtue but of the quality of being.

Mr. Garnett begins in something the same way. He is busy with the process of his characters becoming conscious of their condition, and the predicament in which they are discovered is certainly fatal. But what he finally does to his characters is quite different. It is more like what happens to the people in Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* (with the exception of Spandrell) or the people in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. The characters are compelled to recognize that they cannot be integrated. Or put the other way round the conditions of their lives are such that, being made intensely aware of them, they can only judge those conditions, and so necessarily themselves, in a kind of moral disintegration. That is what happens to Benedict and Simon in *No Love*. It would evidently, in Mr. Garnett's view, not have been what happened, had he cared to portray it, to Benedict's father, Roger, who died whole.

In this connection the juxtaposition of announced theme and final resolution is interesting. The theme is from a sermon by Donne: "S. BASIL says, he saw an oxe weepe for the death of his yoke-fellow; but S. BASIL might mistake the occasion of that oxes teares." The resolution, the last paragraph of the book, is Benedict's final judgment on his friend Simon and is also as the theme suggests his unknowing judgment upon himself: "It's because there's No Love. No Love in his heart. He has never learned what it is from other people. That's the explanation. No Love."

The notion of the book is that it is impossible for these people to learn what love is from others or from themselves. There is the suspicion of an unspoken myth that had they learned love they would not have so horribly failed as human beings. It is possible that Mr. Garnett may have unintentionally confused himself with St. Basil.[1] The disintegration into which Benedict and Simon fall is, almost apparently, due to other causes: the war and the tone of post-war times — when if English society was not itself disrupted at least the individual soul lost its principle of unity. Among novelists and many publicists disintegration of the spirit has become the studied interest of the age. Sometimes it is called a disease. Sometimes it is argued to represent a stretch of consciouness: as if a permanent condition of the spirit had been unearthed.

At any rate the prevalence of such an attitude among the more actively honest novelists has made a great difference in the treatment of character. The suffering of Isabelle Archer is given entirely — a perfect thing — because the whole weight of the book is to make her aware of her whole life, of life itself, integrated in her mind. The tragedy of Benedict and Simon in *No Love* fails to hang together not only because their lives cannot be integrated but also because the narrative, being anecdotal, cannot be integrated either. Their story is none the less poignant for that; it is literally too true to life.

[1] Yet Arnold Bennett after reading *Point Counterpoint* "comes to the conclusion that Jesus may have preached the Sermon on the Mount in vain." (*The Realist.* Vol. I, no. 1, p. 11.)

R. P. BLACKMUR

SARAH ORNE JEWETT. *By Francis Otto Matthiessen. Boston. Houghton Mifflin Company.* 1929. $3.00.

Mr. Matthiessen has achieved a singularly appropriate biography. To delineate the character and career of a major writer requires deep resources of intellectual energy; to treat a minor writer calls for subtlety and an uncompromising sense of proportion. Mr. Matthiessen has made his book the right length, selected for it the right technique, given it the right tone, and discovered — after some preliminary uncertainties — the right style.

As biography the book is admirable, solving without recourse to high coloring the problem of making interesting so uneventful a life as Miss Jewett's. As a critical study also, it has its virtues — an intelligent sympathy with Miss Jewett's type of imagination and an unpretentious understanding of the refinements of her style. But, despite these virtues, Mr. Matthiessen as critic is less satisfactory than he is as biographer. He clearly defines neither the qualities which make Miss Jewett's better books so moving and so nearly great nor the limitations which so unmistakably establish their position this side of greatness.

In the closing paragraph of the book we read that *The Country of the Pointed Firs* makes us dream. There is, surely, more to be said than that. The local color novel has been predominant in our literature because our novelists have wanted either the courage or the ability to undertake a more inclusive interpretation of American life. The faults of this species of novel are many, and they have been intensified by the reticences and reluctances of the Victorians. And yet, though concern with the provincial scene has for the most part given us an emasculated literature, there is, when characters are drawn from life and not from the established stock of local types, the possibility of portraying certain definite phases of the human tragedy.

It was a very incomplete vision of truth that was vouchsafed Miss Jewett, but it was truth that she saw. Her mode of existence and her training led her to exclude from her fiction much that is important in life, but she was also spared any deep concern with the exciting irrelevancies of modern thought. Her books, portraying a quiet alternation of uncomplaining suffering and unrhapsodic joy, seem to catch a fundamental human rhythm. Though she had the poor taste to admire Aldrich and Lowell, she had the good fortune to spend most of

her days among the kind of people she wrote about. These men and women had neither the time nor the talents to erect those barricades against life which the Bostonian literati were so skilful in constructing. Miss Jewett learned much from her farmers and fishermen, and she might have learned more had it not been for the flaccid influences of the *Atlantic* and its editors and contributors.

She is precious to us not merely for those niceties of style which Mr. Matthiessen points out, nor yet merely because she is, as he admirably shows in his study of the 'nineties, definitely superior to her contemporaries, but also and chiefly because she caught on the Maine coast a glimpse of human reality. For this we forgive, though we do not overlook, her unconscious prudery, her occasional sentimentality, her narrowness of perception. It would be pleasant to think that Mr. Matthiessen's book might serve to bring to her stories the readers they deserve, but one fears that, having too successfully caught the gentleness and unobtrusiveness of her manner, it will lapse into the semi-oblivion that has been Miss Jewett's fate.

GRANVILLE HICKS

A PACKET FOR EZRA POUND. *By William Butler Yeats. Dublin. The Cuala Press.* 1929. 10*s.* 6*d.*

It is difficult to imagine that this little book will give any great pleasure to Mr. Pound, or to anyone else for that matter. Its thirty-seven pages are divided between some ten pages of diary gossip, a score or so for a new introduction to the portion of *A Vision* called The Greal Wheel — this book is evidently being rewritten — and the remainder is occupied with a desultory "letter" to Mr. Pound. The only unity or consistency in the book is to be found in its reflection of Mr. Yeats' mind: he makes play with his old hatred for abstractions, his belief in the revelatory imagination, in the universal bond made between the minds of men by the elemental things that know neither time nor place. The only interest in the book is its description of the manner in which *A Vision* was written, and we are not encouraged to accept this account implicitly, for there is a passage here which recants the original account prefixed to the first issue

of *A Vision*: not that any but the most simple will have accepted that, but that this new account is even as wonderful and no more credible.

He confesses,

> All of *A Vision* except the section on the twenty-eight phases, and that called "Dove or Swan" which I repeat without change fills me with shame. I had misinterpreted the geometry, and in my ignorance of philosophy failed to understand distinctions upon which the coherence of the whole depended, and as my wife was unwilling that her share should be known, and I to seem sole author, I had invented an unnatural story of an Arabian traveller which I must amend and find a place for some day because I was fool enough to write half a dozen poems that are unintelligible without it.

It is well to have this frank explanation for it will always serve to illustrate Mr. Yeats' method of telling the truth in an imaginative or dramatic manner — symbolical precision no doubt. The new account tells that *A Vision* originated with his wife's successful attempt at automatic writing, begun after their marriage in 1917. This was followed by exposition in sleep-speech and continued to 1920 by which time he had fifty copy-books of automatic script and a lesser number of records of what had come in sleep. Then "they" bade him set to writing, and the result was that strange book, *A Vision*, of so much of which he now, very properly most will agree, confesses himself ashamed. The rewriting, apparently, has not been accomplished, as much of it as is ready, without the help of these same otherworld communicators, but Mr. Yeats declares that he is now publishing only what he can understand. The student of Yeats will, doubtless, pick from the present book valuable dates and a fact or two, but although it contains a poem, very little pleasure; and will refer to it, rather, in pity or irritation that the poet has not said to his prose as to his songs,

> Move among the lovers of perfection alone.

S. O'F.

HENRY THE EIGHTH. *By Francis Hackett. New York. Horace Liveright.* 1929. $3.00.

This book has won a conspicuous welcome and approval from the majority of non-historical reviewers. Here at last, they seem to have felt, is a biography unmarred by mistakes of fact, amply grounded in historical research, and safe from professional attack. It satisfies the layman's desire — half snobbish, half sporting — to see the popularizer triumph in the materials of the specialist. No doubt this feeling of vindicated amateurism is justified. Mr. Hackett has made himself an unquestioned master of the period, and put himself in shape to speak with a glibness and minute particularity that defy ordinary criticism. Misprints aside, perhaps the only obvious slip is an incidental reference to Oliver Cromwell as a "descendant" of Thomas Cromwell (p. 413).

Yet the historian though baffled of mere technical errors and weakness, such as have marred a number of recent biographies, has perhaps some right to feel that this book has been over-praised. What after all has Mr. Hackett achieved beyond a *vulgarisation* of somewhat more than average magnitude and pretence? He makes no claim to give us new information. The materials he uses, the brilliant dialogues contained in letters, diaries, ambassadorial reports, have nearly all been used with equal effect elsewhere, in the standard works of Pollard, Froude, Brewer, Friedmann and others. Mr. Hackett's only merit (if it is one) is to have lopped off all references to the sources from which these passages have come, thereby lightening the page, and impressing the inexperienced reader who wonders whether such colorful and modern psychology can really have come from ancient documents. Mr. Hackett may of course be praised for the fluent language on which he sails these splendid relics. His style is capable of the broadest contrasts, dramatic, ironical, poetic, often falling into over-copious alliteration:

> "When there was dirty work to do such as procuring witnesses, serving on juries, hunting down papists or heretics, sitting in parliament or convocation, the test of perfect pliancy was upheld by the piercingly intelligent Cromwell."

Yet the significance of this book, if it has any, does not lie in its style, but rather in the conscious attempt to "be *then-minded,* to use imagination and intuition, to suggest life" (author's Foreword). Mr.

Hackett approaches his task as a "psycho-historian" (a phrase coined, I think, by Gamaliel Bradford). The method is that of a novelist, the underlying attitude, a compound of modern psychology and historical relativity. History is the interaction of the man with a time-environment.

"Henry cannot be seen apart from his occupation, its nature and its diseases. He was a man before everything, but his kingship colors his drama and sets his scene."

No one could quarrel with this thesis which is essentially that of Pollard, and of anyone who treats this sort of history.

But Mr. Hackett's bias has swung him continually too far; the background is abnormally swallowed in the over-sized foreground of human individualities. True there are abundant pictures of the environing times, but they are rather rich and intensive than broad and illuminating. He gives us the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and the Pilgrimage of Grace because they are easy and picturesque and dramatic. But where are the great Parliamentary acts which tore England away from Rome, the Acts of Annates, the Acts of Appeals, the Act of Supremacy, and where are their successors, the acts concerning treason, and those granting Henry the right to dispose of the crown by will, and giving his proclamations the force of law? Where is the great drama which was played round the suppression of the monasteries? These are barely touched, yet they were as much the material of Henry's life as the marvelous nightgown of Anne Boleyn made from fourteen yards of black satin, and the "rather promiscuous, desperately serious, highly lascivious and intensely passionate" circles of youth in which Katheryn Howard passed her way. This is no reproach to the moral tone of the book, which, though realistic, has studiously kept down pornographic sensationalism even where it abounds invitingly in the documents. The fault is aesthetic, and lies rather in the excessive personal concentration which has neglected to create a sufficient backdrop. Brilliant as are some of the characters, they cloy from over-emphasis. The words that are applied to Henry could be re-applied to the book itself, "hot-looking, heavily-perfumed, lightly sweating."

That one should take a hostile attitude toward this book does not mean that one fails to recognize its brilliancy and merit. Beside a slender inexpensive piece of work like *Elizabeth and Essex* it is un-

commonly satisfying as history, and not disappointing as literature. Yet a certain antipathy inspired by the purple blurb lingers throughout the reading. Among other things the jacket boasts that the author spent six years in preparing the book. There is no reason to doubt the statement, but one feels entitled to wonder whether the result was commensurate.

DANA B. DURAND

BELPHEGOR. *By Julian Benda. Translated by S. J. I. Lawson. With an Introduction by Irving Babbitt. New York. Payson and Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $2.00.

Belphégor, originally published in 1918, is less relevant to criticism at large than *La Trahison des Clercs* and probably owes its American translation to the discussion aroused by the latter. In a review (*The New Republic*, Dec. 12, 1928) of *La Trahison des Clercs* Mr. T. S. Eliot points out that M. Benda was insufficiently critical of the writers he examined; the same fault, perhaps to a greater degree, is exemplified in *Belphégor* with regard to M. Benda's treatment of ideas. *Belphégor* suffers from indistinctness of point of view, as it runs together the notions of concept, symbol, idea, intellect, intelligence, the generic, etc., now applying these touchstones with one set of meanings, now with another.

M. Benda's method of ascertaining the aesthetic of contemporary French society is suspect as he has not weighed his authorities. Under such headings as "The cult of the indistinct," "The religion of music," "That art should present the individual soul," "The demand that art shall be lyrical," etc., M. Benda has grouped his ideas developing them by repetition, generalities, and ironical comments, then adding illustrations from a philosopher-critic (Bergson, Péguy, Ghéon, J. Florence, T. de Visan, etc.), and finally contrasting the statements of the philosopher-critic with those of the exalted but partly adulterated (on M. Benda's admission) seventeenth century. We are to believe that the statements of these writers are not only the genuine reflections of French society but gospel truth. M. Benda never questions the truth and validity of their premises; their statements are ultimate, and M. Benda repeats them as if they were divinely trans-

mitted. There is something awry and terrifying in the deadly earnestness with which M. Benda gives assent to these statements. M. Benda cannot make us believe that he has laid bare the aesthetic demand of French society by superstitiously accepting the views of a few rhapsodists. To make manifest the nature of the aesthetic of French society was the stated intention of M. Benda, but the documents quoted in the footnotes prove that his bogey is M. Bergson, that *Belphégor* is in all essentials a continuation of M. Benda's earlier attacks on Bergsonism, and that *Belphégor* has relevance to French society only in so far as French society exhibits Bergsonian traits. That it exhibits and has exhibited other traits is clear from the works of Rivière, Maritain, Valéry, Meyerson, and Maurras. M. Benda's attack is doubtless justified; but, as in similar attacks, M. Benda's muster of irony and acumen is wasted because of the ephemeral nature of his subject. Arnold's broadsides against British Philistinism are defunct: the present variety has changed its face, is up-to-date, so that if Arnold were alive it would be necessary for him to scrap his nineteenth-century terminology and use that of the present, and so on, ad infinitum. We do not believe that *Belphégor* has indirectly delivered a sharp blow at Bergson's philosophy. The book represents a layman's point of view; and the layman always feels uncomfortable in the presence of a philosophical idea. We admire M. Benda's knowledge of seventeenth-century French literature, but he is not constituted a philosopher thereby. M. Benda has devoted his energies to the exposition of a fashion; with the natural death of that fashion (at least as presented in *Belphégor*) the usefulness of his book has disappeared.

E. B.

POOR WOMEN! *By Norah Hoult. New York. Harper & Brothers.* 1929. $2.50.

Poor Women! is a singularly depressing gallery of seven portraits of women: of Bridget Kiernan, a slatternly kitchen-maid worrying over her possible pregnancy; of Mrs. Johnson, a whore, penniless, sick, and drunken; of Violet Ryder, a drab little office-fool of seventeen, with a nagging mother and a semi-professional harlot for friend

and guiding star; of Alice, a moron small-town church-worker, bitterly conscious of her fading youth, and proud of the cowardice which is respectability; of Miss Jocelyn, a characterless, ineffectual spinster, reduced to dependency upon relatives whom she envies, fears, and dislikes; of Monica, hysterically awaiting the visit of her lover, who has repented and returned to his wife; and of Ethel, sensual, vulgar, tired of her lovers, and trying vainly to recapture comfort and "happiness" by the seduction of her husband, whom she has once deserted, and whom she despises. All of these women, though they differ accidentally, have two essential traits in common: cowardice and laziness. Miss Hoult's thesis seems to be that since the average "unsheltered" woman is economically dependent upon some man or other, an automatic and embittering struggle is set up: the woman's most important job is to ensnare and to conciliate the man, whom she hates, *qua* man, but who is, unfortunately, her sole means of existence. This thesis may be true, although if it *is* true most of us must be astonishingly struthocamelian; But Miss Hoult has not succeeded in demonstrating it. Her poor women are not victims of men whom they must placate. They are victims of themselves — of their own cheap ignobilities, their own mean jealousies, their own vacant imbecility. This, too, of course, is a valid thesis. But it is not, like the other, capable of universal application, as Miss Hoult would apply it. For her characters, live and real as they are, have no general significance: they are individuals, they are un-typical, they are almost studies for a psychiatrist's case-book. One is aware here of the presence of individual misfortune — yes; but since the cases are abnormal to the point almost of caricature, the tragedy is restricted and only superficially moving.

Unfortunately for Miss Hoult, *Poor Women!* challenges comparison with one of the finest (and, incidentally, one of the most neglected) books of the century: Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives.* Miss Stein succeeds precisely where Miss Hoult most importantly fails. The good Anna, the negress Melanctha, and the gentle Lena, do more than live in and of themselves: they are faultlessly drawn individuals, but they are also eternal types. The tragedy of Melanctha is not the tragedy of Melanctha alone; it is the tragedy of all the passionate, selfish, careless, self-pitying women in the world. The tragedy of Miss Hoult's Mrs. Johnson, on the other hand, is proper to, and ends with, Mrs. Johnson. The failure is one of insight and artis-

tic power: Miss Hoult has essayed a task which is beyond her. She sees her women, but she is not enough of a psychologist to be able to understand them. She assembles a great mass of detail, but she lacks the intuitive artistry which discards, selects, and arranges significantly. Where Gertrude Stein, who is a very great artist and psychologist indeed, has given us three *lives*, Miss Hoult has given us seven photographic studies from the life. The difference is fundamental.

DUDLEY FITTS

I THOUGHT OF DAISY. *By Edmund Wilson. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.00.

This book, Mr. Wilson's first in novel form, is a study of artistic life in Greenwich Village, a sketch of atmosphere, and a course in The Life of Reason. The narrative is unimportant; and Mr. Wilson's analysis of character is made almost wholly subordinate to its effect upon the speaking protagonist, the chief — one might say the single — realised person in the book. The form of the book, the shape it assumes in the mind of the reader, is the sense of spiritual change in the mind of the protagonist[1]: so that the book is the manufacture of an attitude.

As a study of artistic life *I Thought of Daisy* is apt, acute, and unpleasant. Two parties are rendered in their entire gin-soaked inanity. The stupid conversations of half a dozen mediocrities are rehearsed and their equally stupid fates indicated. Likewise, the atmosphere of New York is generously conveyed. Mr. Wilson and his protagonist are aware of traffic, harbour smells, streets, Coney Island, kitchens, public statuary, prostitutes, movies, salons, filling stations, and so on. This awareness being in the senses it is translated to the reader.

All this is background. It is the image of the society in which the protagonist is immersed, is almost drowned. It is that society in which personality must either discern the Life of Reason or come to ignominy. Mr. Wilson submits his protagonist to the influence of two women — Rita and Daisy — and two men — Hugo Bamman and Professor Grosbeake. Rita and Hugo Bamman represent respectively

[1] It is difficult to refer to the person who is the subject of this book as he is nowhere named.

the negative, sensual and the positive, intellectual sides of the romantic, passionate, radical, egotistic, and humanitarian attitude toward life. Against these Mr. Wilson endows his protagonist with no natural defences; but rather exposes to them the essential weakness of human character: a weakness the protagonist exercises at every opportunity until he is at the point of intellectual extinction and emotional despair. It is this influence that compels the protagonist to judgments such as this on the creative life, in which he himself had hoped to participate: "And Verlaine, in his prison cell, with his imbecile alternations between piety and pornography — if he had published his religious poems as he had originally intended to do, sandwiched in between his poems of lechery, he would have furnished a perfect example, an example forever ludicrous, of the disorder of the poet's mind." A few pages later, I select these phrases: "Yet the writer had falsified life, because he had pretended to harmonize something of which he was conscious chiefly as chaos, and to explain what he was aware, all too well, he could not fully understand. . . There was the concerted general effort, the gigantic universal imposture, of literature itself. . . As if there could ever be a common denominator, as if there could ever be a fusion or union, between those moments of tranquillity and our moments of pain." Dante, Dostoevsky, Sophocles, and individual life are attacked and discarded.

The first two-thirds of the book explicate this state of mind. Then a visit is paid to Professor Grosbeake whom the protagonist had known, but had not studied under, at college. As a result of this visit and a later one to Daisy and her current paramour Pete in the Adirondacks, a complete reversal of attitude is brought about. Finally, during a trip to Coney Island with Daisy and in his room afterwards, the attitude is made clear and articulate. "As I recalled my gloomy meditations of the night of Sue Borglum's party, I remembered how the Greeks had given Sophocles the name of 'the Attic Bee.' Yes: I saw it: there it was: it was acrid, but still honey; and it was something more than beauty of verse. . . It was not that the Athenian jury had merely demonstrated their gratitude for — that the crowds at Dostoevsky's funeral had merely regretted being deprived of — a sedative to which they had become addicted; but that both had been ravished by the taste — and by it had been partly repaid for the harshness of the common life — of the miraculous secretion of the mind

which there was only one man to supply." And finally, thinking of Daisy, the ordinary American woman of whom anything might be made, there is the assertion of unanimity: "What relief and what a rebirth, our only real birth into this world, when from the fears and snobberies of youth, from all our preconceived ideas, from all those foolish abstractions we learn, all those things that we think we think, we find at last in these beings who have crowded, offended, disgusted or fought us, that interest and that value which we have found only in a few or in one — when, youth's passion and anguish spent, we see rising about us that reality of those we have looked on as strangers, and know that it is our reality — that what is strange to us is strange to them, that what hurts them hurts us, that what is good for them is good for us — when we no longer dread the fool nor hate the one who wounds us, but can sleep in our beds in peace and in peace face the waking world!"

The book, then, is the rediscovery of traditional wisdom, the reassertion of faith in rational life. Its great virtue is that the mind that is here awakened, awakes in the contemporary scene envisaged realistically. The great defect of the book is that it is not a novel but an essay, partly in the guise of fiction, about life; and I think, from a technical point of view, that this defect exists largely because Mr. Wilson chose to have the protagonist act as narrator. Thus it is very difficult to see what happens to the narrator except as he from time to time writes down his reflections. The limitation is not so much too severe as it is the wrong kind of limitation for the theme: it makes proof dialectical, argumentative; and proof, in a novel, should be dramatic — in action and feeling — when the protagonist's reflections would flow necessarily from his experience, and when, better still, his reflections would be his experience. As it is, we have an extraordinarily interesting book instead of an extraordinary novel.

R. P. Blackmur

Things to Come. *By John Middleton Murry. New York. The Macmillan Company.* 1928. $2.50.

Mr. Murry combines three offices in this bewildering miscellany; he is an essayist, a philosophic writer, and a prophet. "The Divine

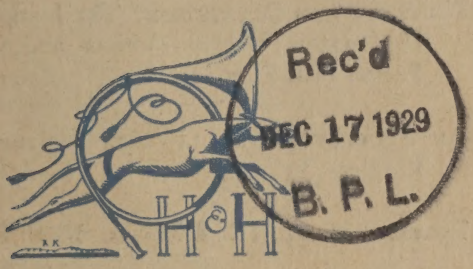
Plain Force" is a most charming bit on Charles Lamb's love for Fanny Kelly and rejected proposal, a precious cameo concealed under a mass of confused apocalyptic canvasses. The "Need of a New Psychology" states loosely one useful method for ethical study. "Man is what he is potentially, he is that more truly than he is anything else. That may seem nonsense to some minds, but let us ask them quite simply how are we to describe, in what terms can we define, a living and evolving creature, save in terms of what it may become. We do not know what it may become, says the unimaginative rationalist. But we *do* know. Take all the heroes of humanity; choose from among them those who have made the deepest and most permanent appeal to man; try to discover what those men really were; if you can discover it, that is what man *is*."

This method, if it is to be pursued, requires a careful, analytic, rational mind. Mr. Murry, whose mind like everyone else's is lazy, unlike any genuine thinker, neglects to discipline it, and rhapsodizes vaguely on intuition, imagination, and new syntheses. Here are some of his conclusions: "Jesus' God, the good God, the loving God, the Father Almighty, did not exist. Jesus died knowing it." "I hold that we humans have it in us to make God what we desire. If we truly desire a loving God, we can have him — at the price. The method of God-creation is simple: you have only to remember the simple fact that what you do, God does; what you are, God is. . . . Every man has the responsibility for God upon his shoulders." "In this matter I have no desire to be original; nor have I any overwhelming desire to be understood." "A modern man will more quickly and more truly find what the Kingdom of Heaven means from Shakespeare than he will from the New Testament itself." "I, as my readers should know by this time, am a Romantic." Mr. Murry's manner is that of "Verily I say unto you." Unfortunately he speaks not as one having authority.

BERNARD BANDLER II

THE *Winter* 1930

Hound & Horn



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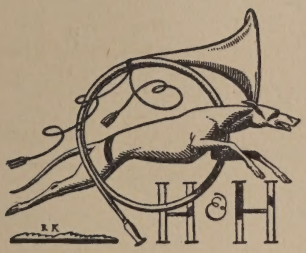

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EDITORS

BERNARD BANDLER II LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FRANCIS FERGUSSON is the assistant director of the American Laboratory Theatre and has written book reviews for THE HOUND & HORN.

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WILLIAM POLK is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, and a lawyer.

A. HYATT MAYOR graduated from Harvard, has attended the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and has taught at Vassar.

CHARLES NORMAN recently published his first book of Poems-(Knopf).

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT is a Boston architect, and has frequently had verse and criticism in THE HOUND & HORN.

KENNETH BURKE was well known to readers of *The Dial*. This is the second of his declamations to appear in these pages.

ROBERT MCALMON has had poems and stories in *transition*, *This Quarter*, and many Continental and American journals.

HERBERT READ is the author of "English Prose Style," and a book of war stories called "In Retreat." Harcourt Brace & Company will bring out a book of essays called "The Sense of Glory," of which the present, "Hawthorne," is one.

MARY BUTTS is an English novelist and poet, living in Paris. She has written "Ashe of Rings," "Armed with Madness" and a philosophical essay on the relation of Einstein to art.

ALLEN TATE has written books on Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis and a volume called "Mr. Pope and Other Poems."

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EUGENE O'NEILL

I

AFTER Mr. O'Neill had spent several years travelling about the country with his father, James O'Neill, who was playing in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and a few more bumming all over the world, he fell ill; and while recovering in a sanatorium, decided he wanted to write plays. His first plays, written while he was studying under Professor Baker at Harvard, and working with the young Provincetown Playhouse, are the product of his romantic youth and a desire to write for the stage. They are not complicated by the anxiety about his own soul which gets in his way later, and, more clearly than his later work, they show the real nature of his vocation to the stage. The first published volume, *Thirst*, is now repudiated. Mr. Barrett Clark, whose book[1] on O'Neill contains all the available information about his life and the origins of his plays, says that the plays collected under this title are similar to those in the earliest preserved collection, *Moon of the Caribbees*, though cruder.

The first thing that strikes one on reading the latter collection, is the over-emphatic language. The characters, usually the crew of a tramp steamer, communicate almost entirely in

[1] *Eugene O'Neill, The Man and his Plays*, by Barrett H. Clark, 1929.

profanity. Mr. Clark, who once made the crossing on a cattle-boat, testifies that the dialogue is not inaccurate; but the more educated people in the later plays, while not so profane, also seem to be laboring to express the inexpressible, and achieving a similar flatness. I conclude that the fault is with the dramatist rather than with his material. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that, except in the "atmospheric" play, *Moon of the Caribbees*, the author remains on a level with his characters. We are required to accept people with ineffable sorrows or longings as carrying the main burden of the play. And the plots and situations are built on a similar assumption of a vast emotion which cannot be put into words.

I understand that Mr. O'Neill has never liked *In the Zone*; but it seems to differ from the other plays in the volume we are discussing, chiefly in having a neater and more self-conscious technique. It may be that Mr. O'Neill thinks that this interferes with its sincerity; or it may be that I do him an injustice. The crew of a tramp steamer crossing the submarine-infested zone, is nervously on the watch for spies. What a spy would be doing there is never satisfactorily explained. This does not prevent the men, in search of a scapegoat, from suspecting Smitty. This character is a recurrent figure in the early plays: a melancholy and solitary hobo "of the higher type." Someone discovers him reading a batch of letters one night; they tie him up in spite of his screams, and investigate. But instead of the telegrams from the Kaiser which they expected, they find letters from Smitty's lady-love, who rejected him years ago because he drank. One dried rose falls to the floor. At this sudden revelation of hidden sorrow the rough sailors, whose hearts are really of gold, are abashed and conscience-stricken.

This plot, which, however absurd it may sound in the

telling never fails to move an audience, is really as helplessly bombastic as the language; a language of childish superlatives which are always trying to imply more than they succeed in stating. I take it that the essence of melodrama is to accept emotions uncritically; which, in the writing, amounts to assuming or suggesting emotions that are never realized either in language or action. Melodrama in this sense is a constant quality in Mr. O'Neill's work. It disfigures his middle period, when his feeling for a character is out of all proportion to that character's importance to the play, as well as his later period, when his attempt to deal with his own unattached emotion takes the unhappy form of a passion for some large idea. In fact it seems that Mr. O'Neill typically resorts to the stage, not to represent emotions through which he has already passed; which have been criticized and digested, and so may be arranged in patterns to form works of art: he resorts to the stage to convey a protest, the *first* cry of the wounded human being. His fundamental feeling for the stage, so clearly shown in these first plays, is not that of the artist, but of the melodramatist: the seeker after sensational effect.

Nevertheless his naive belief in emotion is related to a priceless quality, which one may call the histrionic sincerity, the essence of mummery. Every dramatist as well as every actor depends for his power over his audience on his own belief in what he is trying to put on the stage, whether it be an emotion, a character, or a situation. An audience is extremely malleable. It may be swayed by suggestion, hypnotized by the concentration of the stage figure. This complete concentration, which would be wrecked by a wakeful critical faculty or a touch of humor at the wrong time, Mr. O'Neill possesses in a very high degree. It is the secret of his success; and when it is joined to an interest in a character, it produces his best scenes.

II

After Mr. O'Neill had exhausted the vein of mood and atmosphere derived from his early experiences of bumming, he ceased to write melodrama for its own sake, and developed an interest in people he had known or heard about. His next plays begin with an interest in a character or characters. Mr. O'Neill thus explains[2] the origin of *Beyond the Horizon*, the earliest play of this type to be preserved: "I think the real life experience from which the idea of *Beyond the Horizon* sprang was this: On the British tramp steamer on which I made a voyage as ordinary seaman, Buenos Aires to New York, there was a Norwegian A. B., and we became quite good friends. The great sorrow and mistake of his life, he used to grumble, was that as a boy he had left the small paternal farm to run away to sea. He had been at sea twenty years, and had never gone home once in that time . . . Yet he cursed the sea and the life it had led him — affectionately . . . I thought, 'what if he had stayed on the farm, with his instincts? What would have happened?' . . . . And from that point I started to think of a more intellectual, civilized type . . . a man who would have my Norwegian's inborn craving for the sea's unrest, only in him it would be diluted into a vague, intangible wanderlust . . . He would throw away his instinctive dream and accept the thraldom of the farm for — why, for almost any nice, little poetical craving — the romance of sex, say." Though we do not have Mr. O'Neill's account of the origins of most of his plays, I should say, from internal evidences, that *Gold*, *Anna Christie*, *Diff'rent*, *All God's Chillun got Wings*, and perhaps *Desire Under the Elms*, started from a similar interest in a character, which was sometimes real, sometimes partly

[2] Quoted by Barrett Clark.

or entirely imaginary. I shall look at *All God's Chillun* as typical of this group. It shows his most characteristic failings as well as some of his very best results.

The first scene shows Ella, a white girl, and Jim, a sensitive little negro boy, having a childish love affair in their native slum. This scene, unnecessary for the main theme of the play, is typical of O'Neill. Its only possible relevance is as psychological and sociological background, for the important information is duplicated later. I shall have more to say later on about Mr. O'Neill's use of this type of realism. Meanwhile observe that the realism of the dialogue and the natural history of a stage full of children (which, I may say is extremely difficult to do practically), are complicated by a kind of symbolism or super-realism of the set. The scene is a street-corner, one street being full of black faces and negro tunes, the other street full of white faces and *their* tunes. Aside from the sloppiness of leaving so much to the carpenter and the regisseur (which I shall also mention later), it may be doubted whether realism with a super-imposed symbolism of this kind is ever a success. Even Ibsen, with his Wild Ducks and his sea-ladies, has the greatest difficulty in making it seem anything but artificial, and Mr. O'Neill hasn't a tenth of his skill.

Ella falls in with tough companions and gradually degenerates, while Jim painfully acquires education and starts to study Law. Ella, disillusioned with her own kind, marries Jim in a moment of depression, as the only "white" man she knows. There is a good "symbolistic" scene showing the newly married couple emerging from the church between rows of hostile faces, white on one side and black on the other. And then the real drama begins: the struggle in Jim between his love for Ella and his ambition to succeed in the world; the

struggle in Ella between her love for Jim and her hatred of him as the cause of her exile from her own people. The point of conflict is Jim's career: for his self-respect he needs to become a lawyer, while Ella, who has never really accepted Jim as her husband, needs to preserve her spiritual ascendancy by preventing him from passing his examinations. Tied together by their love and by their solitude, they alternately take refuge in each other's arms and fight for mastery or vengeance. The scenes throughout this middle part of the play, in spite of their inadequate language, are deeply convincing. But at the end they both give up: Jim agrees to play a little boy to Ella's little girl. In effect, they cease to strive for an adult relation of husband and wife and accept a childish one.

Now if the previous scenes mean anything, this conclusion marks a degeneration on both their parts. But Mr. O'Neill, under the necessity of ending his play, asks us to accept it as a hard won *Verklärung*:

Jim — Forgive me, God — and make me worthy! . . . Let this fire of burning suffering purify me of selfishness and make me worthy of the child you send me for the woman you take away!

Ella — Don't cry, Jim! You mustn't cry! I've got only a little time left and I want to play. Don't be old Uncle Jim now. Be my little boy . . . Come and play!

Jim — Honey, Honey, I'll play right up to the gates of heaven with you!

What is the reason for this extraordinary failure of Mr. O'Neill's to master his material? Between the untidy and unnecessary first scene and the bathetic and evasive finale, there are several scenes of really tragic significance. Beginning with a person, and proceeding with that complete concentration on the stage figure which I described above, Mr.

O'Neill sometimes sees his people so deeply that they acquire overtones of universal import. One may sometimes feel Jim and Ella, through their excellent concreteness, as every pair of exiles in love, and their story as realizing certain profound truths about the relation between a man, his work, and his wife. But these jewels are so rare, and are imbedded in such a disheartening matrix of psychology, bathos, and cheap symbolism that they seem not only accidental but misunderstood when they appear. And the end finally persuades one that the author wrought better than he knew. He turns away from his tragic vision, and all is lost.

But did he ever have a tragic vision? The finale, so wrong for the middle scenes, is not inconsistent with the characters. The reason it jars is that it belies the point of view from which their struggles were seen as having a dignity and a significance beyond themselves. It might be appropriate in some terrible comedy, but the characters are not seen as in any sense comic figures. In fact, they are not seen "as" anything: if they at times reveal heights and depths, that is an accident, for Mr. O'Neill's relation to them is personal. They are for him friends and enemies, other individuals in an anarchical universe, not parts of any larger vision. He is prepared to echo their cry, "Can such things be?" It is all very well for a character in a play to demonstrate this emotion, but when an author shows it it means that he has not digested his material to the point where it becomes suitable for a work of art. Interested in his people's psychology, yes: hence the filling in of naturalistic background in scene 1; but interested in the esthetic value of their destiny, no: and hence no possible ending for their story. Mr. O'Neill is right when he says,[3] "Life doesn't end, one experience is but the birth of another.

[3] Quoted by Barrett Clark.

Violent death is seldom the solution of anything, in life or in fiction. It is too often a makeshift device . . ." Life doesn't end, but a work of art does; a work of art is a bounded whole, and Mr. O'Neill's unsatisfying endings are a proof that his interest in his people is not the disinterested and final one of the artist, but the developing and tentative one of a man among men.

But Mr. O'Neill's power of convincing an audience is vastly aided by the fact that his belief in his characters is so purely naturalistic. Where there is no publicly established convention, the only way to make a character acceptable is to establish him naturalistically. An audience will believe in a character who used to play on a certain street-corner in Harlem, and whose father was in the coal business, but it will not believe in one who can only be identified by the qualities of his soul, and toward whom it is invited to adopt no personal attitude. The limitations of this type of realism have been admirably studied by Miss Virginia Woolf, in her essay, *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown.* It has this inestimable advantage of being publicly understood, but the most that can be said for it as an art form is that it may, as in this play of Mr. O'Neill's, lead to the accidental discovery of a few muddy diamonds. Mr. O'Neill himself has never been satisfied with it; he has never called himself a realist: we have seen that even in these plays of his middle period he resorts to symbolism. And finally he abandons his interest in character altogether and attempts to enunciate general ideas.

III

Beginning perhaps with *The Hairy Ape*, and continuing through *The Fountain*, *The Great God Brown*, *Marco Millions*, *Lazarus Laughed*, and *Dynamo*, Mr. O'Neill's character studies are interspersed with, and finally superseded by, plays in which the author shows no interest in the concrete, and assumes the role of prophet. It is as though he had ceased to interrogate his acquaintances about what he is to expect of "Life," and had begun to interrogate Nietzsche and other nineteenth-century philosophers. About the prophecies themselves Mr. Clark says the last word: "If O'Neill were a genuinely original thinker, or even a brilliant spokesman for the ideas of a brilliant thinker, we might argue as to whether we should be the losers if he were to give up writing plays altogether, but his ideas as contributions to contemporary thought are negligible; they are at best slightly varied forms of what we have all been reading during the past decade or so." Lazarus' Nietzschean exclamation is typical: "Men are also unimportant! . . . Man remains! Man slowly arises from the past of the race of men that was his tomb of death! For Man death is not! Man, Son of God's Laughter, *is*!" Mr. O'Neill is not a thinker, and we need not attempt to investigate his thought any further. It is true that Lazarus sounds a little like Mr. O'Neill's own fundamental cry, that "life goes on" — implying, perhaps, some confusion between pessimism and the unhappy ending, which would affect his ability to write plays; moreover, it is doubtful whether Lazarus' generalized and rather hysterical optimism could ever be realized in live characters; but the question which concerns us more nearly, in our attempt to understand Mr. O'Neill as a playwright, is not so much the quality of the

thought as the relation between the thought, the author, and the play.

Mr. O'Neill, we find, is more interested in affirming his ideas than in representing the experience in which they are implied. The example of Elizabethan drama seems to prove that an unsatisfying philosophy may underlie a great play. But there the play is the thing, and the philosophy may at most be deduced from it as from a direct experience of life. In *Lazarus Laughed*, on the other hand, there is little or no play at all, for Caligula, the anti-Lazarus, is no more credible than Lazarus himself, and their conflicts fail entirely to move us. The burden of the play is carried by two elements: by Lazarus' philosophical arias, and by spectacular effects of crowd movements and colored lights. About the first of these, enough has been said. With regard to the element of spectacle, Rheinhardt has shown us what can be achieved in this line, especially in his production of Büchner's *Danton*. Gordon Craig[4] has hailed these departures as first steps toward a new form, his hypothetical "pure art of the theatre." As a form, it is related to the 17th Century Masque, and the modern revue. It seems to mean a dissolution of the classic partnership of actor and author, to which we owe most great drama, in favor of a third figure, the regisseur. A good regisseur may of course get artistically satisfying effects with well-trained crowds and carefully calculated light and sound effects — too often at the author's expense. When an author resorts to it, it usually means that he has ceased to be interested in mastering the medium of the stage. This is certainly true in *Lazarus Laughed*: the stage becomes Mr. O'Neill's lifeless megaphone. Nothing stands between the audience and Mr.

[4] *cf.* Hyatt Mayor: *The Ideas of Gordon Craig*, HOUND & HORN, Spring, 1929.

O'Neill, shouting his views. For his relation to his ideas, in these prophetic plays, is the same as his relation to his characters in his middle period: they are emotionally significant to him, they play a part in his equilibrium as a man. Attaining no vision outside himself, his plays remain attached to him by his eternal immaturity.

We are not surprised to find, therefore, that his audience is often more interested in the author than in his play: "It is salvation the agnostic playwright is seeking. One might trace his life like one of those dry southwestern roads where the Penitente Brothers have laid down the dead man they are carrying. O'Neill's plays are crosses. Follow the road he travels and you will often hear the sound of flagellation. Look and you will see that the whip is brought down by a tormented soul on his own back. But flowers grow on this desert track, and the mountains and the sunset lie 'Beyond the Horizon.'"[5] The very imperfection which connects the author with his play also connects the author with his audience. The one quality which his admirers agree in stressing is his sincerity. We have seen that he believes in his own mood in his early plays, and in the personal reality of his characters in his middle period, while in his latest plays he is in earnest in asserting some Nietzschean war-cry. As a person, he is sincerely interested in figuring out his life, and perhaps in attaining a stable point of view — though unconsciously. He has in fact never attained it. He has managed to recognize his emotional demands, but he has not reached the further heroism of accepting what becomes of them: of describing them with reference to some independent reality. He has a sense of human needs, but none of human destiny. He offers us the act of seeking, but no disinterested contemplation;

[5] Elizabeth Shepley Sargent, in *The New Republic*, March 16, 1927.

himself, therefore, rather than his work. Only the dead cease to change; but by discipline it is sometimes possible to produce a work complete and independent of the suffering individual. Mr. O'Neill's failings may all be ascribed to the fact that he has never found any such discipline.

IV

I do not intend, in this essay, to enquire directly to what extent Mr. O'Neill's failure to find a discipline through which to realize his talent is due to his own shortcomings, and to what extent to "conditions" beyond his control. A slight acquaintance with modern drama since Ibsen shows one how difficult it is to write plays of artistic as distinguished from sentimental or sociological interest. But to tackle the general question of Mr. O'Neill as a modern dramatist — and an American — would involve questions which I am not competent to treat. It seems more profitable to compare briefly Mr. O'Neill's career with those of two other American playwrights, Mr. George Kelly and Mr. E. E. Cummings, who followed very different paths to the stage, in the hope that some sense of Mr. O'Neill's place in the contemporary scene may emerge by implication.

Mr. O'Neill began to work about the time of the 1912 Renaissance. He belongs with Mr. Mencken, Mr. Sherwood Anderson, and Mr. Theodore Dreiser (who was in advance of his time). This was the generation that raised the hue and cry about Puritanism. They were, as a group, impatient of tradition and convention, and their great discovery was their emotional needs. They were more interested in a man's emotions than in a map of them; therefore, more interested in

the man than his work. Most of them wrote fiction — a genre which is much better suited to this temperament than the stage; but they also gave birth to the Little Theatre, and Mr. O'Neill, whose first plays were produced by the Provincetown, is in many ways a Little Theatre product. This movement seems never to have had anything more positive than a dissatisfaction with Broadway, and an ambition. It was a revolt against narrow commercialism; it asserted that the theatre was an art; but, having no standards and no technique, it remained somewhat ineffectual in its new freedom.

Mr. George Kelly on the other hand is a product of the commercial, which is also the professional stage. He began as a vaudeville actor[6] and presently he was writing his own skits. He stood behind the scenes with a stop-watch, and if the audience did not laugh soon enough, he rewrote the act. From vaudeville he graduated to the three-act comedy, and finally to the drama. His experience proves that a certain sense of craftsmanship is not incompatible with Broadway, rare though it is there: having set himself the comparatively modest problem of making the *honnête* Babbitts laugh, he was rewarded by the natural discipline which an actual audience and a particular stage can give. Assuming the viewpoint of "commonsense" where O'Neill urges some large idea; accepting the realistic set and the realistic dialogue which he found publicly established, where O'Neill was always making strange demands on the carpenter and the electrician, Mr. Kelly's work was that of the artist: to master and refine a given medium to the point where it can be made to realize his vision. While Mr. O'Neill's freedom has resulted in a complete loss of bearings, so that he has of late almost ceased

[6] A short biography of him appeared in an issue of *Theatre Arts* devoted to American dramatists.

to be a dramatist, Mr. Kelly has bequeathed us several comedies which are complete, and refer to nothing outside themselves. If they are rather trivial, and if there are signs[7] that his home-folks, having moved to more expensive suburbs and learned to drink gin, are no longer to be satisfied with his neat little interiors, the fault is not with his method, which was after all the method of Shakespeare and Moliére. Mr. Kelly seems to have encountered the limitations of the theatre as it exists with us here and now. It is doubtful whether a method, which depends upon an acceptance of the existing theatre, would ever prove the solution for a man of Mr. O'Neill's potential dimensions.

If the Little Theatre, in its revolt against commercialism, forfeited incidentally the discipline of the craftsman which a Kelly could work out for himself on Broadway, it never showed the slightest tendency to develop its own standards and its own conventions. A play with a "kick" has remained its ideal. We have seen that the personality of the author or the agony of some unassimilated "character" can satisfy its cravings for drama better than a formal and autonomous play.

Mr. E. E. Cummings, however, was a poet before he tried to write for the stage. That is to say, he had trained himself — with what success I shall not attempt to say: his method rather than his results concern us here — to see his material as an artist. His play, *Him*, is evidently more "autobiographical" than any of O'Neill's and yet the characters at least of Him and Me are acceptable as parts of the pattern of the play without reference to the author. Without trying to judge the merit of the play as a whole, I should say that the scenes between Him and Me have all the qualities we have failed

[7] *Behold the Bridegroom*, the latest play, about Long Island, was a failure commercially.

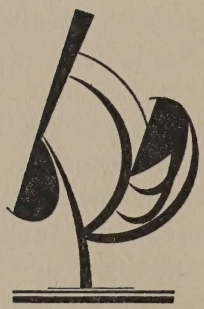
to find in Mr. O'Neill's work. The characters, the rhythm, and the sense of the stage are all of a piece, whereas in Mr. O'Neill's plays we find realistic dialogue, symbolistic settings, and characters which are unamenable to any pattern or underlying rhythm. In a real writer for the stage, language, character, and the sound and movement of the stage, spring from the same root conception. A Moliére dialogue implies the stage empty save for a few spectators, a little furniture, and the actors; it implies a rhythm derived from the pantomime of the Commoedia dell'Arta,[8] and a certain relation between actor and audience. A Cummings' dialogue implies a brief light interval between "blackouts," a certain rhythm derived from the vaudeville act, and an audience which good-humoredly challenges the performer to "put his stuff across." Mr. Cummings' work, in fact, has style. His solitary discipline has enabled him to work in stage terms, disinterestedly, and with a mastery which Mr. O'Neill, for all his experience, has never attained.

But Mr. Cummings, unlike Mr. Kelly, is an artist of the theatre without either theatre or audience. I have said that his style was derived from vaudeville, but no vaudeville actor could manage a speech of Him's and no vaudeville audience could understand his play. In spite of his very authentic feeling for the stage, and in spite of his ingenious and courageous effort to dramatize his very lack of connection with a live stage and audience (so neatly of a piece with the "stunt" feeling of his vaudeville style), Mr. Cummings' first play remains mere closet drama. It was in fact produced at Mr. O'Neill's native theatre; but the Provincetown's crowd of Greenwich Villagers, just the thing to relish a revival of *In the Zone* and *Moon of the Caribbees*, were at a loss to deal

[8] *Cf.* M. Ramon Fernandez' *Moliére*, in the series *La Vie Des Hommes Illustres.*

with *Him*. Mr. Cummings does not belong at the Provincetown. So far he does not seem to belong anywhere. But Mr. O'Neill indubitably belongs at the Provincetown, at the Guild, in the suburbs of London, in Berlin, and in Little Theatres all over the English-speaking world. The man O'Neill is very close to a vast audience.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON



THE LITURGY OF SMALL SUSAN

'and seyde: O deerë child, I halsë thee,
In vertu of the Hooly Trinitee,
Tell me what is thy causë for to syngë
Sith that thy throte is kut, to my semyngë?'

Small Susan clutching at Azraël's lapel —
She died rapidly. We felt
Sorry in unison. The gent with the beard
Precisely dropped a lovely tear;
Mother crossed herself, and Pa
Staggered down the stairs to crank the car.

℣ It was very affecting.
℟ We were moved, all of us.

Death like a darling mannered cat
Sedately pounced on Susan's back.
Death is cleanlier at Sea:
Susan's hue is sub-marine.
Death is handsomer in youth:
How natural Small Susan looks!

℣ Will you take lemon or an onion.
℟ Profoundly.

Who shall weave her seamless shroud?
Who depart the crape around?
Who shall knoll a careful knell?
Who shall delve her house? who shall
Pale her down lest the vampire come?
'Done' quoth the beard; and it was done.

℣ Some of them are my very best friends.
℟ Did you have an easy decease?

Who'll troll a stave for her epicede?
Who'll versify Small Susan's threne?
Who'll thole her tholing? who'll compound
Her meed in strophic trentals loud?
Who'll cheat the lyre of a deathsong?
'Sung' quoth the beard; and it was sung.

℣ I sometimes think it's best we don't know.
℟ Did you speak?

'Small Susan died last night. O loss
'Irreparable at any cost!
'Smiling she died, and, dead, she smiles
'In diminishing fragments. Crisply filed
'Away with worms, her corruptible clay
'Enriches our lawns till the Judgment Day.'

℣ We all come to it, sooner or later.
℟ She stains the time past, lights the time to come.

'What song the Syrens sang, What name
'Achilles bore, What fretted place
'Trist Orpheus calmed, What harbouring
'Orestes found at last, What wind
'Streaks thin the wail of damnèd wights:
'She knows, and, knowing, comfort finds.'

℣ I tore her tattered ensign down.
℟ It was married chastity.

'Small Susan died. Who mourn for her,
'Commit her name to the plangent air.
'Bespeak the ouzel and the wren,
'The halcyon and ptarmigan:
'These the undersong divide,
'And shrill her planh along the sky.'

℣ One can be too careful.
℟ And one clear call for me.

The altarboy gapes adenoids, and
Father Considine can't bend
Downward from the loins, or up-
Ward from the loins: the Mass is a jape,
The bread is leaven! the chalice dusty!
She rests in peace, gents; don't be fussy.

℣ I'm sure it's the better way.
℟ All we like sheep.

The beard is wet, and wags amain.
Father Considine displays
Fulgid the theophagic Host.
Mass is said. Her soul's at rest.
Gentles, your prayers to ease the way:
Small Susan shinnies Peter's gate.

℣ Even calico elephants remember.
℟ A novel situation, this.

O carefull Verse! her light is gutted—
(Acridly, teeth on edge, prevent her)
O heavie Herse! her path's be-nighted—
(Portal of lead: and enter, enter,
All my love!)—Sweet whoreson Death,
Ev'n now I top her in your bed!

℣ The street is dark, I shall stumble.
℟ Sirs, in my heart there was a kind of fighting.

DUDLEY FITTS

THE PATRIOT

WHEN it got too dark to read, the old man with the grizzled beard laid his book on the window-sill — it was *The Republic* of Plato — and took up the fruit jar of corn liquor.

The room was dark, dusty, cavernous. The fading fringe of orange light that slipped through the tattered curtains and lost itself in the black marble mantel, dimly disclosed a chaos of old furniture, bottles, and books.

The door flew open so violently that it banged against the wall.

A negro stumbled in hatless, sweating, trembling. He fell on his knees and begged the old man to hide him. He had, he said, killed a country storekeeper in a fight over some tobacco. He had been put in jail. A mob had taken him out to lynch him. In the woods he had escaped and run a long way. He was afraid now that the mob would find him and finish its work.

The old man called. A mulatto boy answered.

"Take this note to town and give it to the Sheriff." He wrote: "A man here has killed another. Come and get him." He signed it, "Hugh Clark."

He went back to the window and picking up the fruit jar unscrewed the top. He heard an automobile stop in the road beyond the hedge. The negro trembled visibly. Hugh Clark put down the fruit jar. From the shadows of the room he produced a pistol, antique, rusty and apparently useless.

"Go upstairs," he ordered, "and hide under that pile of fodder in the hall." The negro bounded up the spiral staircase.

Clark threw open the front door and stepped out on the porch.

He peered sharply into the thicket that had grown up in front of the house, where long ago a terraced lawn had stretched its green smoothness. He saw no mob, but only two men and a woman walking up the path. It was strange to have visitors. They walked slowly, gazing at the old mansion. It stood on the crest of the rising ground, far from the road, strongly and simply proportioned. Gray it was and, on close view, dilapidated; nevertheless, the symmetry and dignity of its colonial architecture were unimpaired.

This place had belonged to the Clark family for many generations. Hugh had been there for some thirty years, alone except for two or three negro families that lived in the cabins that squatted near.

The two men who came up the path were unfamiliar to Clark, but the woman — her walk, her mauve dress, the lift of her arm as she pointed out something to the young man — he knew her.

At first she did not recognize him. He had changed so much. Thirty years can be a long time. She thought, it would have been better not to have come.

Then she cried, "Oh, Hugh!" and taking his hands in hers turned to the men with her. "This is my son, Christopher," she said, "and this is my husband, Aubrey, Aubrey Holladay."

A little later, when Aubrey and Chris started to look around the house and grounds before it got too dark to see, Serena — that was her name — said:

"Wait, Hugh, I want to have a talk with you."

They sat on the wide steps of the porch — Beauty and the Beast. The amber air was warm and still. The distant woods were like a tapestry woven of many hued greens. On a little

hill far off to the right lay a farmhouse, like a mouse, in the center of a vivid pool of wheat, surrounded by the coffee-colored stalks of last year's cotton patch. Over the wheat field floated the dim pink cloud of a peach tree in bloom.

The woman laid her hand on the man's arm and said softly: "My dear . . ."

"You have been gone a long time," he answered.

"Yes, a long time and a long way."

Her husband, Aubrey Holladay, was one of those Southerners who had left the South of Reconstruction times, gone North and become rich. He and his wife had lived out West, in New York, and, intermittently, in Europe.

She spoke impulsively. "I had to leave, Hugh. Did you blame me — you didn't, did you? You know I loved you — never anyone else . . . But I was withering up here. That's why I ran away. I had a dread of being tied down here . . . fixed, fastened in this country. You know? I hated it . . . poverty . . . heat . . . niggers . . . dullness."

She looked at him, an old man now, much older than he should be, old and worn, wrinkled and ragged.

She thought: I knew it. I knew it would be this way with him . . . too impatient, too impractical. How could he expect people to listen to him and his ideas.

"Of course," he answered. "I never blamed you. You were sensible."

He glanced at her. She was still beautiful, still charming, with her eyebrows wide apart as in the lovely marble Aphrodites, the soft brown eyelids low over the deep blue resourceful eyes, the sweetly determined chin and the lips that had always asked and taken the pleasant things of life. Her little hat hid the graying hair but not the jade earrings.

She had always loved money, pretty things, admiration —

and, he thought, deserved them. If he had married her, how could he have given them, how could she have secured them, in the South of thirty years ago?

He thought of himself as he was then, a few years out of college, a teacher of Greek and of history, believing that through his teaching and talking and writing he could make the gracious ideals of the ancient Grecian civilization sweep like a flood of light over the turbulent, prejudiced, passionate South of his younger days.

She asked as a child might have questioned:

"Why didn't you run away, too?"

It was now the time of day that is known in the language of the countryside as "dusty dark." The oaks and elms deepened from pale to olive green, and the cedars and pines to black. The sky was a dull, blank gray, and a gray light sifted like ashes down over the land. The jagged branches of a lightning-blasted oak stood sharp against the sky, as if cut out of night itself and pasted on it.

He said, "Well, I don't know."

He sat there thinking, staring out under his eyebrows, his knee drawn up and his chin resting on his fist. He was thinking of all the things in this country of his that he had once so ardently fought and always so bitterly hated . . . poverty . . . ignorance . . . virulent intolerance . . . masked violence.

He stopped thinking and listened. She had been talking, but he had not heard her.

"I forgot to tell you," she continued, "Chris is an architect. He's a good one already. Has been doing well in New York. But now he wants, of all things, to locate down here. He keeps talking about the South, its growth, the opportunities for development. Hugh, won't you tell him how foolish it is?"

But the old man was thinking of himself and his relation

to this land. This love of country . . . patriotism . . . how curious! "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." . . . Take the South after the Civil War. Why should anybody with means of locomotion have stayed in it? And yet, all the fine people, the finest, that did stick by it! He thought of his father killed in battle fighting for the Confederacy . . . of his mother in the Reconstruction South . . . of all the gallant and honorable men and women who had so freely given to this much-loved country all of themselves, "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." And he felt that he had always been bound by bonds invisible but secure.

"I couldn't have lived out of it," he said, "any more than you could have lived in it."

Dusty-dark was giving way to the robin's-egg blue of the end of twilight. It was as if the opaque gray sky had been drawn up silently, like a curtain, leaving nothing between earth and heaven but the tenderly crystalline, vivid, infinite blue. The blue deepened around the slim new moon in the western sky. Blue night, thought the old man, this must be that vision of perfect beauty which Socrates saw that evening on his way to the banquet.

Serena laid her finger-tips on the man's shoulders caressingly.

"Do you remember," she asked softly, "the last night that I was here?"

He remembered. A night in May. Such a night as ought never to have happened in those Victorian days. He had not even yet forgotten the soft warm darkness, the shadows of the magnolia leaves outlined by the mooonlight on the wall, dancing to some unheard music, the warm, snowy blossoms of the cape jessamine . . . the moonlight white on her throat and purple on her hair . . . the sweetness of her lips . . . the

pressure of her arms.

He said, "I remember."

She frowned a little, as if in doubt about something, then spoke hurriedly. "There's something I ought to tell you — should have told you long ago, perhaps. Chris, my son, is not — he is not my husband's — not Aubrey's — son."

She hesitated and Hugh looked up at her in astonished silence.

"He is your son," she said.

His son!

He arose abruptly and went into the house. The oil lamp was lit in his room. Aubrey Holladay and Chris were there. He looked keenly at his new-found son. There was a resemblance. The same long, loose-jointed body, and that same trick of walking up and down with long strides and stuttering when excited, as just then when he was arguing with Aubrey, and the same way of thrusting his fingers through his hair until it stood wildly upright.

Serena called Aubrey out on the porch.

Hugh Clark, alone with his son, wondered what this young fellow would think of him. He could think of nothing to say.

Chris was turning over the books that were scattered everywhere. He would like to borrow, if he weren't presuming too much on such short acquaintance, this one, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*.

Yes, Mr. Clark was delighted to let him have it — a charming picture of the brilliant Florentine Renaissance. Mr. Holladay was an architect and intended to locate in the South?

Exactly. Very shortly. The South was the place. It was settled. The final argument had taken place a few minutes ago. He would come South. What would he design? Schoolhouses, bridges, public buildings, among other things.

Mr. Clark would be glad to see some of his plans, blue prints, if he would come again soon. Really? Of course.

When Serena and Aubrey came back, they found the young man and the old one leaning together over the table. Chris was sketching on the flyleaf of the *Book of the Courtier* the plan of a schoolhouse that he would put up some day in the South.

They left.

The old man was alone again, but not lonely. His heart was light. He felt himself linked to life again. What was that phrase — from *The Tale of Two Cities*, wasn't it? — that his mind kept groping for? Restored to life? No. "Recalled to Life!" The struggle with ignorance, poverty, ugliness was not over yet. His son, better equipped and with a mind more practical than his own, would succeed where he had failed. Perhaps from out of the bitterness of his own experience he might advise and help him. He saw great powerful buildings rising up under his son's hand. He saw the sanity and freedom and beauty of his old Greek world passing insensibly into his South over the long white curves of the mighty concrete bridges that his boy would build.

He looked into the night, over the woods and the fields sleeping under the inky blue sky and across the hills where the town tinged the skyline with a faint flush. *Recalled to life!*

He sat there for an hour, maybe two.

Then he caught sight of a dim figure dodging behind the trees to the left of the house. With a start, he remembered the negro who had come to him that evening for protection.

So, the house was watched. Would there be a mob and would they attempt to search the house. Well, if so, there would be trouble.

He did not like the affair. Yesterday he would have wel-

comed such an opportunity for a fight, yesterday he put no value on life. But now that his son had come and lighted again within him the love of life, he felt a strange desire to avoid danger.

He called his old servant. "Tell the nigger upstairs he'll have to get out," he ordered. But as his servant started up the creaking spiral staircase, old Hugh took a second thought: "If the nigger goes out now he'll probably be killed. He came to me for protection — a human being — came to this house. Was anybody ever turned out of this house because the owner was a coward?"

"Come back," he called to the old servant. "Let him stay."

He went into the house and got his pistol again.

When he came back to the porch he heard someone walking up the path toward the house.

He pointed the pistol at the figure indistinct in the darkness. "Stop! Stop, or I'll fire!"

"Hello, what's up?" It was his son's voice. The pistol sank down. "I came to bring you some of those blue prints of mine to look over and tell me what you think of them." The young man entered the strip of light that stretched from the hall door across the porch and into the night a little way.

The old man trembled. He had come close to shooting the boy.

"You'll have to go back," he commanded harshly. "Right away. I'm busy."

As his son, offended, turned to go, fear seized old Hugh, fear that his son might be mistaken in the darkness for the fugitive and shot.

"Wait," he pleaded. "Go in my room and wait for me there."

Surprised at the insistence of his voice, Chris went in.

An automobile came speeding along the bumpy road half screened by the thicket from the house. Its brakes screeched; its light went off; its motor was silenced. Then another stopped — and another — and another . . . The old man lost count of them.

He heard stumbling footsteps and whispered curses and saw a fitful flashlight on the path. There must have been forty or fifty men, keeping close together, with handerchiefs masking the lower parts of their faces.

One of them stepped forward. "Stand aside," he commanded. "We are going to search this house."

Old Hugh cocked his antiquated pistol.

"I'll shoot the first one of you," he said almost gently, "that puts his foot on these steps."

His son appeared in the doorway. "Here, what's all the racket?" he asked, stepping out on the porch in the light from the hall.

The old man jumped in front of his son. "Stay behind me," he begged. "For God's sake, go back — go back in the house."

He stretched out his left arm to hold his son behind him.

The leader of the men below fell back a step at this sudden movement. Something flashed in his hand. He fired. His shot was low.

"Thank God I am in front," thought Clark. He pulled the trigger of his pistol. It snapped.

Something fell behind him. He turned. It was his son. The bullet from the leader of the mob below had struck the stone pedestal of a porch column and ricochetting had missed the old man and hit his son in the temple. The blood was streaming from the wound. Hugh knelt by the boy.

The young fellow's breath was already coming in labored, raucous gasps. The men on the ground heard it. They had

killed a white man. This was something serious. They withdrew and disappeared quickly.

The boy's breathing ceased.

The old man got up from his knees painfully. He wiped his bloody hands on his trousers. There was a tight feeling across the bridge of his nose, his eyes burned and the corners of his mouth twitched uncontrollably.

He walked to the door, as if asleep, and stood there for a long time, staring at something — a dirt-dauber's nest in the paneled door — but without seeing it.

After standing perfectly still for several minutes, he suddenly strode into the house. Walking straight to the window of his room, he took from the window-sill the fruit jar and held it up to the light. It held nearly a quart of colorless corn whiskey. He turned it up to his mouth and took a long steady drink. The fiery liquor seemed to soothe the dull, tired ache of his body. Scraps of verse were running senselessly around in his brain, around and around.

Stepping over to his bed, he picked up a book that lay upon it, turned the pages carefully, stopped, read one page slowly, tore off part of it and, holding it in his hand, went on the porch. Kneeling by the body of his son, he placed the scrap of paper on the boy's forehead, gently gluing it on with the blood.

Then he staggered back into the house and sank down in his chair by the window. His heart pained him and he drew his breath with difficulty.

He reached for the fruit jar and drank again and again, like a tired horse at a brook. The floor of the room tipped gently and he felt himself sinking down — down — down — softly into nothingness. The empty jar fell from his hand and broke on the floor without disturbing him.

When the sheriff and his deputy arrived the next morning, they found old Hugh slumped down in his chair, oblivious of the flies that swarmed upon his face. They also found the body of a young stranger on the porch.

The circumstances caused the sheriff to think it probable that Clark had killed the young fellow.

"Arrest him and bring him along," he said.

The deputy bent over the old man.

"I can't," he answered. "He's dead."

They went on the porch. The scrap of paper was still sticking to the forehead of the young man. The Sheriff tried to read it but finally gave it up as a mystery. It was printed in Greek.

He suspected that it was a curse the old man had put on the boy.

But when it was translated, it turned out to be only some poetry from that part of the Iliad in which Helen is watching the battle from the walls of Troy and wondering where two of her kinsmen are:

> "'Two, two only remain whom I see not among
> the commanders . . .
> Dare they not enter the fight or stand in the
> council of heroes?'
> So said she. They long since in Earth's soft
> arms were reposing,
> There, in their own dear land, their Father-
> land, Lacedaemon."

WILLIAM POLK

PICASSO'S METHOD

THIS article is an attempt to describe Picasso's method and to consider its usefulness for an artist of today. So far as I know this has not been attempted in any of the innumerable studies that his work has provoked. Anyone who wants penetrating, though scattered, remarks on him, should look through Guillaume Apollinaire. By far the most detailed biography is in André Level's "Picasso" (1928). The most comprehensive collection of the drawings is in Waldemar George.

"Les peintres espagnols sont plutôt contrastés que coloristes." Baudelaire's remark applies to more than the mere pigment on the canvas. Picasso is the most Spanish of painters in this respect, if in no other, for no artist has ever proceeded more startlingly by contrasts. An exhibition of his work looks like a gathering of paintings by artists of every modern tendency, and with nothing in common but mastery of their several styles. He has, to be sure, originated none of the new departures of painting in the last twenty years (de Chirico, for instance, was already "neo-classic" by 1908), but he has thrown more weight than any other painter into the final direction which each new departure has taken. It is difficult, but possible to group his work into some three periods, although one must always allow for plentiful throwbacks and forerunners. When he came to Paris in 1900, he had already received a sound training in painting from his father and from the Spanish art schools. His first efforts in France were some Toulouse-Lautrec subjects, painted with almost the richness of Renoir. He has never since used paint with such

relish for the medium. Young as he was — only nineteen or twenty — he was already an artist through and through, a transmuter, and never, like Lautrec, a naive eye-witness to horrors. (Behind every Lautrec stands the boulevardier testifying: "This I saw with my own eyes.")

Picasso stretched out into his first long strides about nineteen-five and six. A stranger far from home, he painted, with blues from the farthest horizons, the abandonment of exiles. "Ces enfants qu'on n'embrasse pas comprennent tant! . . . Ces femmes qu'on n'aime plus se rapellent," as Apollinaire said. These girlish mothers with the sharp masks of consumptives, these skeletal harlequins whose rained-on tights constrict their arm bones, these rickety children that lag behind and can hardly stand for hunger — in them life has abandoned its outworks and smoulders profoundly down their eyes, as it does in animals when they lie dying and cannot understand why. The outline that traces their scantiness trembles like a tear. Only a Spaniard could melt with so profound a pity, and only a Spaniard could turn as callous as the man Picasso next became.

Picasso always has good reason for his transformations. He must have seen that his early study of Puvis and Gauguin had made his surfaces too flat and empty, so he looked to Cézanne for a way of breaking up planes and suggesting solids. He may have felt that his effusions of pity might turn lachrymose, like the "divino Morales," and so went for an antidote to the horror and humour of African masks. And then his uncanny prescience probably flaired, in 1907 or so, the jangled nerves of after the war. For some five years his approach was deliberate, though bold, until he evolved as the cubist of the cubists. Cubism is as headstrong as an engine; only Picasso had the strength to deflect it into human uses.

A cubist portrait, for instance, is a problem as intractable as recognizing Yorick by his skull, or recognizing oneself from one's unconscious. Picasso was the only cubist who accomplished this, in his portrait of Ambroise Vollard, and others. In his hands alone Cubism was brought to serve the intelligent emotions. Many cubist paintings were made to be hung upside down or from any corner, as though they were cretonne pillows. Picasso experimented with this also, but it did not satisfy his ambitions: he wanted juxtapositions that were organized by intelligence, not by mere color sensation alone. He examined the stuffed plush of the Second Empire, its fringed fauteuils, its grained false woodwork, and the mediocrity they housed, dissected these elements like a coroner at an autopsy, then fractured them up in terrorem, and the result jeered like cogs and pistons screeching. The process of the wrecking exhilarates one as tensely as the wrecked result desolates. Milhaud has also caught this feeling in "Le Boeuf sur le Toit" by the breakage of similar banalities (heart-sob songs, the relentless alacrity of pianolas). After being, perhaps, too human, Picasso had dehumanized himself, and not even Hieronymus Bosch ever distorted more bitterly. A cubist painting by Picasso baffles and exasperates until one has started the clue to its interpretation; then one is more than repayed by the excitement of initiation into its wit. The judging intelligence that governs the dislocation and reorganization of some of these paintings makes Picasso classic. He has not yet done with cubism but keeps it by to wrestle with when things may seem too easy.

Picasso was abandoning his "post war" mood even before the war had ended. Just as he had anticipated that chaos by a number of years, so he also anticipated the present reorganization, the new classicism that is now busying the freshest

minds. This is the most difficult transformation of his to describe, because the rest of us are only in the beginnings of the movement. He seems to have dropped painting, which he had treated with less and less respect, and to be devoting himself to line drawing. Superficially, these drawings look as clear as Flaxman, but the intention behind them baffles one as much as the intention behind "Apollon Musagète." One thing is certain, that after going as far as possible to fracture his world, Picasso is now labouring to re-mould it on the firmness of the antique. The surfaces of these drawings are no longer broken into planes; they are not even troubled with shadows, but a line so subtle that it can pretend to be gauche, a line whose elisions have preconsidered *everything*, whips around white paper and infers bodies in action: groups of amazons and athletes, where attack encounters defense, and thrust parries thrust. This interaction is but natural, for Picasso is now a force whose effort calls up instant comments out of the ends of the earth. It is a long time since he was a solitary Spaniard in Paris, painting exiles from hope that shun each other.

Picasso's career recalls Mantegna's: a painter developing towards sculpture. Both Picasso and Mantegna have felt the bitterness of pushing against the doors to the past. Mantegna struggled to recreate antiquity intact (but the wounds of Christ were on him). Picasso achieves a similar bleakness in his jibes at Second Empire apings of Rome. Both men are St. Sebastians bound against ruins, and abandoned by their very executioners. Mantegna's ruins were consolingly genuine, but Picasso's are sham and plaster. Cocteau has an interesting remark in this reference: "Tragedy no longer consists in painting a tiger swallowing a horse, but in establishing plastic relations between a chair moulding and a tumbler that

1925 Pablo Picasso

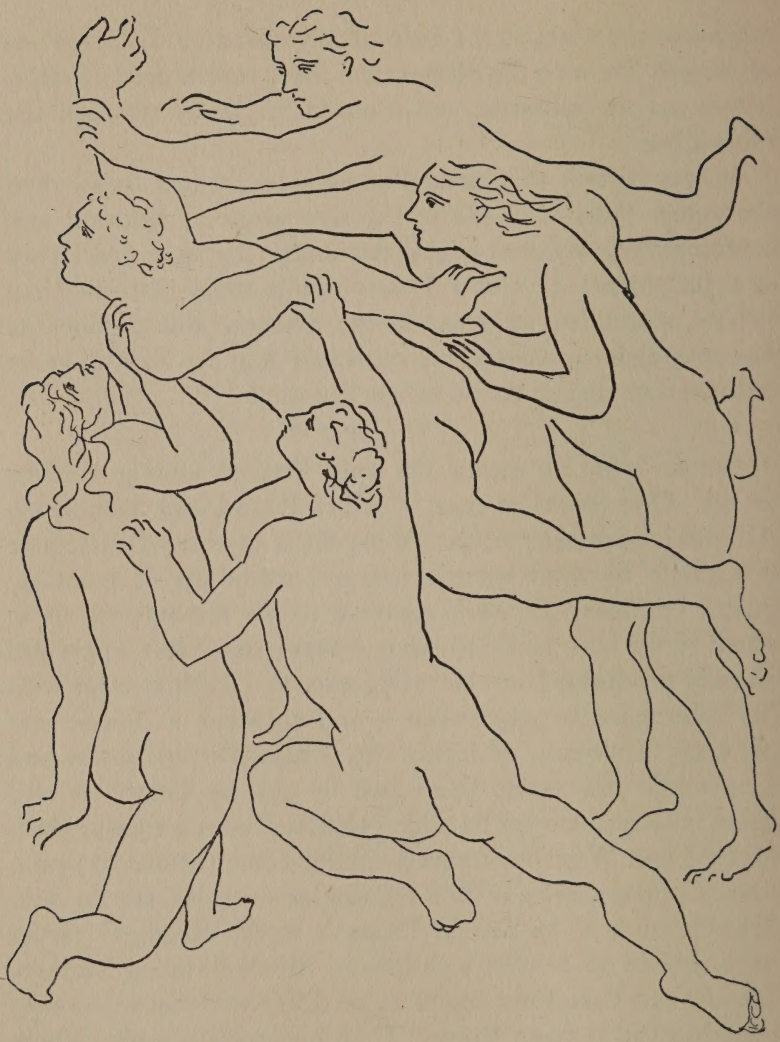
can move me without the help of any anecdote."[1] Often (as in the still life with the plaster casts, here reproduced) Picasso leaves out St. Sebastian and conveys his agony through the ruins alone.

It may be that this latest Picasso is really less classic than the cubist Picasso: classic in the new sense of relevant and contemporary material organized under the firm presidency of a judgment. This new Picasso, while more matured than before, seems less relevant to the present. But perhaps he has once again projected his relevance into the future, as he did when he turned cubist before the war?

* * * * * *

Picasso is by no means the only Proteus among modern artists. One thinks at once of Ezra Pound and Stravinsky. All three have been helped along their careers of successive eclecticism by their eclectic national traditions of painting, poetry or music. Picasso's contrasts might not surprise us so much if we bore in mind what diverse characters Spain has already produced from her allegiance to a faith at odds with her adherence to experience — and to what a diverse experience, Christian, Moorish. St. Theresa's pitifulness and Quevedo's callousness lived side by side in Cervantes and again in Goya. It may be added that in Russia a similar clash of East and West has formed similar combinations of opposites. Contrast, and a certain vernacular austerity, are the only Spanish traits to be felt in Picasso's work. Regional pieties were rubbed off him by a childhood divided among Malaga, Coruña and Barcelona, towns more different from each other than Madrid is from Rome. Then his mother, under whose name he paints, was Italian; and since 1900 he has lived

[1] "La tragédie ne consiste plus à peindre un tigre qui mange un cheval, mais à établir entre un verre et une moulure de fauteuil des rapports plastiques capables de m'émouvoir sans l'intervention d'aucune anecdote."

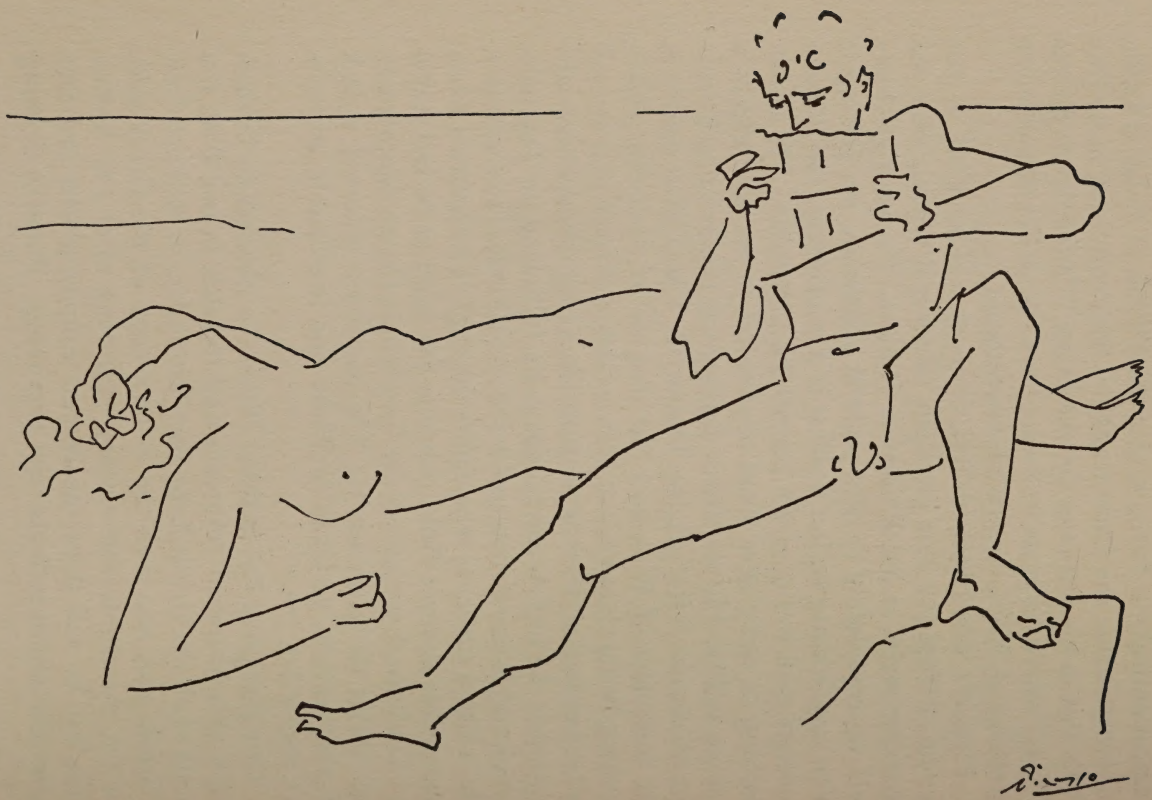


1925 Pablo Picasso

almost entirely in Paris, so that the Picasso of today is Latin, nothing outside the Latin tradition, but everything in it. One feels this in his costumes for the ballet "El Sombrero de tres Picos," where his peasants do not have the air of any particular province of Spain, but are Mediterranean.

Picasso's eclecticism differs from the older kind in not trying to fuse the best elements of several schools into one supreme style, as did Phidias or Rubens. Picasso gives himself up completely to each style in succession, not mixing it with any former style. Rubens is a pancratiast, but Picasso contests each event of his pentathlon separately. He allows nothing to carry over from one contest to the next except a gain in agility. He plans each next contest to correct each present weakness. After all, the Tuscan, the Castilian of beauty is the language of God, and our tongues of flesh can master nothing better than various dialects debased from that central and secret source. Picasso proceeds like a philologist who would approach the lost Aryan language by following up Teutonic, Greek and Sanscrit roots toward their obliterated convergence. He is like a surveyor who sights the angle of elevation of an inaccessible summit from points as far apart as he can travel to (Toulouse-Lautrec and the Byzantines, Congo dance masks and Puvis de Chavannes). He has never allowed a lack of antithesis to paralyze him into one irrevocable attitude, as Canova did.

This discipline has enabled Picasso to play on an increasingly rich historical reference and to catch in one flash the facets of all the Greco-Latin past. Nowadays he will not draw a Greek god, nor even the Roman copy of the Greek god, nor yet the eighteenth-century engraving after the Roman copy, but he will draw the Second Empire plaster cast that copies the eighteenth-century engraving. Picasso's drawing



Ca. 1926

Pablo Picasso

will then send an alert mind careering back through all the Greco-Roman tradition: one will first see that the drawing is by Picasso, one will then be reminded of Napoleon the Third, of Piranesi and his time, of the Antonines, and finally of Polycleitos and his fellows. In precisely the same way an informed Christian, on noticing a little shrub in flames sculptured in a corner of Chartres, will be set to thinking of Moses and his vision of the angel in the burning bush, of Mary's virginity miraculously unconsumed, of her body, like the flames that enshrine the angel, enshrining the Salvation of the world forever. History has to a certain extent taken the place of religion for wide and extra-personal reference. The links that a few, nowadays, are able to forge with the past are our poor makeshift for the great links that once had power to hale us up all into the eternity of Abraham's bosom.

But Picasso has another reason for his museum haunting and his "imitations," in the vaudeville sense. Raymond Cognat, writing about Picasso's designs for the circus ballet "Parade," thus sums up the ambitions of the artists toward the end of the war: "The circus embodied the aspirations of the young men of this time. It was almost their symbol. The importance of terseness and controlled emphasis to the circus, the direct emotions it calls up and the way each actor, to be noticed, must put himself over on well-known and almost hieratic gags, all this attracted these men, who were seeking to give a new discipline to art and to impose strict laws without relinquishing their own fancies."[2] When Picasso or

[2] "Les jeunes hommes de cette époche considèrerent le cirque comme une des expressions les plus exactes de leurs aspirations, presque comme leur symbole. Tout ce qu'il comporte d'essentiel, d'ordonné, les émotions directes qu'il provoque, la nécessité pour chaque acteur, s'il veut être remarqué, de faire preuve de personnalité sur des thèmes connus et à peu près invariables, devaient attirer ces hommes, qui pensaient donner une nouvelle discipline à l'art, lui imposer des règles strictes, sans pourtant renoncer à la fantaisie."

Stravinsky or Milhaud perform upon some worn old theme, it is to spare us the embarrassment of serving up their hearts all raw, and to concentrate our delight on their performance. The more banal the theme, the freer we are to relish the wit they sauce it with. The danger of this is that art may become a routine of juggling. Picasso's electric contact with experience keeps him from being an empty handed juggler. He continues really to surprise us with his art because he is himself perpetually surprised by experience. His slight themes do not make slight works because his focus is so acute. And his integrity has saved him from chic: he creates a taste but refuses to supply it when it has spread into a fashion, for by then he has moved on, and nothing will bribe him to tread his old paths again.

Picasso goes about seeking an angel to wrestle with, for he mistrusts nothing so much as that Alexandrine perplexity that follows when all difficulties have been allowed to yield themselves. When he can discover no change for the better, he boldly changes for the worse, for he is by profession a precursor, one of those "qui partent pour partir." This accounts for many experiments (pictures made of pasted newspaper clippings, etc.) that would seem deplorable if one did not realize that they are the waste places on his route into real discoveries. It is indeed a miracle to achieve experiments as diverse as Leonardo's, and all confined to artistic creation. This restlessness is heroic in Picasso because, had he allowed his bent of nature to run away with him (he, the infant prodigy of the art schools, who used to do a month's problem in a day) he could have floated into popularity, like Raphael, on fluent and overflowing productions. Yet still the danger of facility keeps growing with the very precautions he takes against that danger.

This successive eclecticism of Picasso, Pound, Stravinsky, and Milhaud has much to be said against it if the case is stated generally: for any artist at any time. Our time, however, has no one tradition strong enough to compel a focus on all of us. The barriers are down, and our eye ranges every which way over accumulations of ruin. One dead direction looks as good as another. Yet stick to one, and you die, as Paul Manship has died: the artist must keep changing to keep alive. The uncertainty, which direction to choose, paralyses most men with hesitations, but it has proved Picasso's most powerful motor. He flings himself into each new course as though that alone were worth his faith. This Cartesian second sight and pounce makes an art whose agility is strangely light: "like a feather on the back of my hand." Man can never become an instantaneous angel, but effort toward that end would seem to be the best way of keeping one's naiveté fresh, granted our present conditions.

A painter's future reputation is impossible to forecast, yet it would seem safe to say that Picasso will never take a place among the accepted celebrities, double starred in Baedecker, but among those artists who never cease to be excitedly re-examined by a few — not with Raphael, but with Piero della Francesca and Jacopo della Quercia.

Those critics who reject Picasso because he "lacks personality" are confused about the role that personality plays in artistic creation. They confuse the personality of the artist with the personality of the man. While the artist is creating, he must have absolute control over the man; all the man must be available for transmutation, but none must be in the way. Often, however, the man, burdened with troubles, trespasses on the artist and distracts him from his creating, as seems to have happened to Beethoven. The rarer and more blessed

artists are they who cast off their humanity for the work at hand, who possess the kind of personality that a mathematician displays in seeking out his problems and solving them, a personality that can only be defined as the quality of the clarity under which each artistic project is resolved. Bach was one of these, whose life was one long adventure of losing himself to find himself, in French dance forms, Dutch organ music, Italian concerti. Picasso is another such, and his taste for risks, the heroism of his restless renunciations compose one of the most striking personalities among modern artists, however little they may reveal of him as a man.

A. Hyatt Mayor

The drawing of "Faun Playing Pipes To A Nymph" is reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. John Nicholas Brown. The other two drawings come from Waldemar George's book on Picasso, plates 47 and 23. "Maternity" is reproduced through the courtesy of Paul Rosenburg & Co. "The Lovers" is taken from plate 10 in André Breton's "Le Surréalisme et La Peinture."

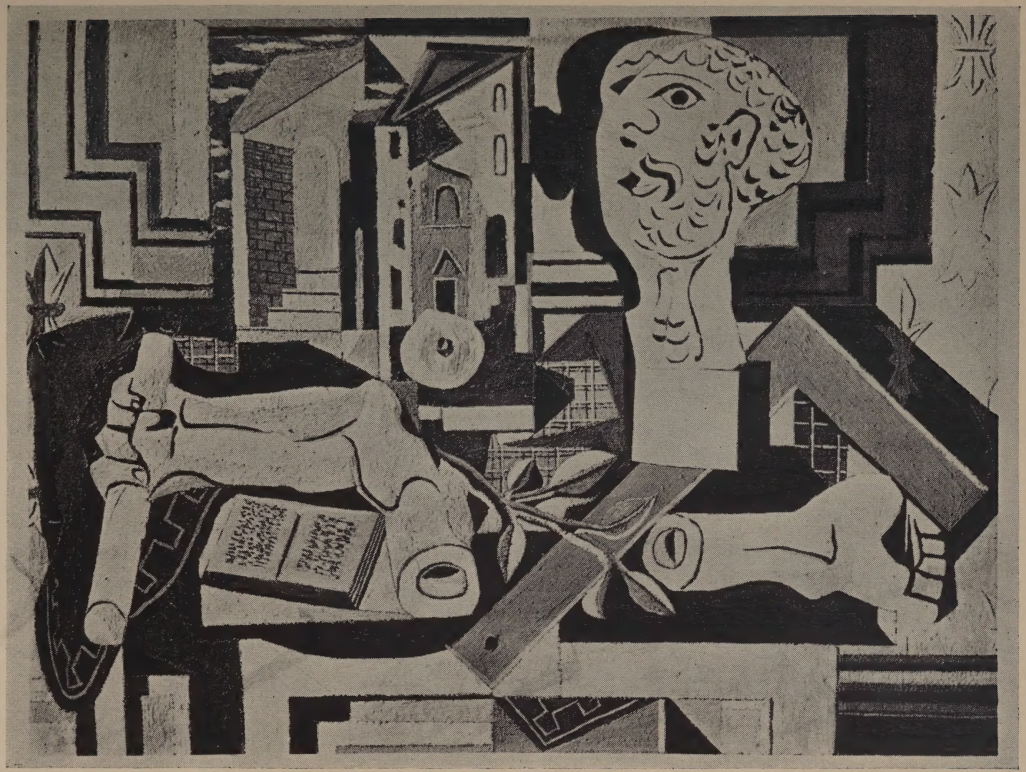
SAPPHIC

Moon-haunted birds flying white in the moonlight
Monotonous above the swaying mast-heads
You will be over the water when under
The sea the galleys.

Charles Norman

Maternity, *ca.* 1903 Pablo Picasso

The Lovers, 1919 Pablo Picasso



Still Life, 1926 — Pablo Picasso

TWILIGHT

A PARAPHRASE

The twelve Apostles cast lots for their journeys to the six ends of the earth.

These golden skeins; these clean as the sea;
these of linen; these hyacinthine;
these like red lightning, and the purpureal
stand for the six allotted lands
where, after twelve years, we twelve go.

Two skeins fell to only one man.
Their color is not remembered;
their meaning was unpleasing.
Even when each was split
the same dye was seen to have run
throughout —
their hues were those of the Indies.

Judas, called Thomas (that is to say, the Twin) knew the historians and geographers taught how India was divided into three parts. The first was said to end in Ethiopia, the second at Media, and the third to complete the country. He was reluctant to accept his lot. But the Lord made Thomas go;

If one must go through India,
which stretches from the ocean to the [darkness,
one goes disguised; —
if one must go to India,
unwilling, doubtful, and fearful;
still feeling one's fingers
probe the loved wound; —
if one must go towards India,
one goes by sea.
One sails fast on a fair wind.

Climb up out of the boat, Thomas,
under the Evening Star;

and after adventures not told here he set out on a coasting vessel, which put in at a port on the way.

go straight through the twin,
stone masts of the water-gate;
push against this voice of flute players,
water-organs, and trumpets.

— Today has been a holiday in our town;
the gods of our town have sent you.
Give your good will to the marriage we
of our King's daughter. [herald

The Apostle resolved to conform outwardly to the people, and to observe the meaning of their manners better than they, while in all things at the same time to imitate the Saviour.

When they pass the perfume round,
dip a little ointment from the jar—so—
for the eyebrows, ears, nostrils, and
Neglect not the tongue; [mouth.
and rub your heart well.
Now, as the myrtle garlands are strawed
and the revellers crown one another,
twist your spray with oak leaves
to wreathe a crown for your own head.
But choose a reed for your scepter,
now, as the floors are strewn.

Yet despite his thoughts, his heart did not open, and he found, like all imitators, that his acts were failures. The reed, with which he would rule, not only bent but broke, and when he presumed to crown his head

Though I lie down with these people
who lie down to feast,
I drink nothing. I feel unable to eat
at this wedding; and the wine tastes to me
as though I had changed it to water.

The flute girl holds the flute in her hands
as she goes among the couches.
She is of my people
and sees me, and sounds her reed

(which no one had crowned) with the leaves of love and power, the leaves of love hurt him.

over my head a long, long time.
Should I raise my eyes, our eyes
would fly forth like birds, and birds
mating.

Also the cupbearer knows me.
(He was in Jerusalem on my day of
He passes me the cup; [fear.)
our eyes know one another.

He has struck me across the face!

"Your act may be forgiven you in death,
"but I shall have that hand
"brought to me by a dog."

The mock scepter broke.
The myrtle of the crown
dug down into my head, like thorns.

At that moment he saw in the Loved One the image of his Soul.

The curtains move.
Our eyes turn to the stairs
which lead to the higher tables.
The curtains part. The bride
stands before the revellers.

"Thou maid, thou child of light,
"to see thee is to look, steadfast, on majesty.
"Thy skirts, like spring flowers,
"give forth a good, green smell.
"Thy forehead is carved with the King, seated
"feeding those seated beside him.

"Truth rest from their labors,
"reposing behind thine eyes;
"with thy feet, little joys are shown forth plain.
"Thy teeth sing thee praise;
"and thine hands answer each to each
"like the dancing chorus of ages.
"Thy fingers are keys to the gate of a tower:
"thy tongue is a curtain behind a door,
"drawn for him whoever enters.
"Thy neck rises like the stair
"whereon man mounts to learning.
"Thy chamber, when warm, breathes balsam and
"It is bowered with iris and myrtle; [myrrh.
"and carpeted with vernal laurel, and oak leaves.
"About thee, stands a wall of seven men —
"groomsmen of thy choosing.
"Seven girls dance before thee,
"while twelve spy out the desires of thy lover.
"They shall all lie down to share his lasting joy.
"They shall all fall away out of time.
"They shall all sink deep away into happy light;
"for they have eaten food which takes away desire,
"and drunken wine which takes all thirst away.
"They are the sons of knowledge;
"They are the daughters of wisdom."

But he was too far from her to have her hear him; and of those close by, only the Flute Girl heard his pathos.

— The song of the stranger dies,
for it could not outlive our silence;
and now it is for us as though
we had not heard one sound.

— Only the flute girl continues to hear it
but then, she is one of his blood.
— Even she stands off from him
and plays her flute to us; and to us
alone.
(Yet she looks at him more and more,
for he grows beautiful under her eyes.)

— The flute girl's tune wanes at the close
as though it died in love.
— She lies down before him,
and gazes and gazes upon him.
(But he looks down at the ground,
waiting until he can go.)

His hid anger towards them who reflected about him his guilty fear began to take effect and was accomplished.

(The cupbearer moves to the fountain
to cool his smarting hand.)
— I heard thunder!
— There is no wrath in the sky.

(A royal lion breaks from his cage.
He scorns the flesh of what he kills:
and rends
One black dog seizes a hand.
It runs up into the feast
wagging its tail, whining with pride.
It has dropped the cupbearer's hand
between the stranger's feet.)

They understood no more than before, but were disturbed and called down their reasonable Ruler to them, who

— O King! come down to our feast! tell
us
What is this man we have taken in among
us?

(The King descends, the flute girl
snaps her pipe
and throws the halves away.)

came and told Thomas to bless the Loved One in her hearing.

—Rise, who command my lions!
Come back, come up with me,
whom even my dogs revenge.
Bless my daughter.

—He has already given one blessing,
and though we did not talk to one another
and were still,
it is as though we had not heard one word.

Christ! could I have made them hear?
For, though I watched,
I have not seen you at this feast.

—Rise! I command you,
Thomas! who have command
over my lions and whom my guests cannot hear;
come, my daughter will hear you—
give her a blessing.

If one must go toward a strange marriage bed,
one goes with a blessing;
but one goes unwilling, doubtful, and fearful nevertheless.

—Rise! I command you, Thomas,
who must command your own reluctance
since you command our desires.

I have sent all but the bridegroom
forth from the presence of my daughter.
Come, give her your blessing.

What shall you say to the lovers
they have not said already?
What is there, left over to say?
I am in a strange land:

Thomas, again reluctant, pondered as he went how he could cast the burden of his duty on God's shoulders.

"O my Lord, who go with me always
"leading me when I trust you,
"uncovering the hid,
"and speaking the unspoken;
"you planted the good tree
"and taught it to bear fruit;
"you are in ever-labouring change,
"who are ever the same, and ever at rest;
"you were in all, and are to come in all.
"Our courage of life, who overcome the foe;
"before whom all doors open,
"and behind whom all mount the wide sky—

"I pray you now, who at another marriage,
"did mix water with water, so that both ran wine;
"as at your first miracle, so now at this espousal,
"as body with body mingles, espouse the good and the happy."

The Sons of knowledge, the Daughters of wisdom, and the Watchers sounded a night alarm against the false pride which follows close upon false modesty.

Beware! Beware!
It is to come
saying in your hearts,
"I am the Christ."
Do not believe.
Reserve your faith. Be proud.
Be stubborn. Be hard.
What is sinful in man before God
is virtuous before this one;
believe, or obey—
your obedience and faith
will compound to your damnation.

Lo! these are Its marvels
told by the groomsmen;
It will say to the Sun,
"Be dark," and the Sun shall darken.
It will say to the darkness, "Shine,"
and the black sun shall be brilliant.
It will turn the moon to blood,
and make it bleed away;
It will walk over rivers of blood,
and on seas as on dry land.
It will make the lame walk after It;
the deaf shall hear It; the blind see It;
It and the dumb shall talk long together.
Its hands shall make lepers be thought clean,
and Its spittle shall cause the sick
to act as though they were whole.
It will cast out devils
that the world may be cast to devils.
It will heal diseases,

that minds may be diseased.
It will do all that Christ does,
but shall raise no one from death —

Lo! these are Its earmarks,
shown by the bridemaids,
that ye may know It and not be deceived.
It is weakly, and young, and lame;
there are bald, white places on Its temples.
Look at Its hands!
Those scabs are not scars.
Study It not in your heart;
Consider It not in your eyes,
for It alters Itself to accord with your will
and shifts Its behavior
to insinuate into your sense.
But, though Its whole head flame before your nerves,
you can tell It always
for It cannot change Its hands.

Lo! The King, your father, sends us from your [chamber;
yet, as we go, we leave warning behind:
This one comes in the form of Christ.
We watchers listen for another coming.
Christ, when He comes,
comes in the form of a Dove
ringed with Doves around,
and with a Sign before.
Seven rings of seven Doves
hovering from Heaven.
The Cross, which is a Voice
shining from the East to the West.

(Tread lightly, we must tread lightly;
it is not yet dawn.
Let your foot-falls sound no louder,
no louder
than the cries on the wind
of sailors who are putting a boat,
by the water-gate
this early, off from the quay.

The lovers still lie sleeping.
But spread the table for breakfast
and bring it before the bridegroom,
the bridegroom and the bride.)

In the morning the Ruler and his Consort entered with their Servants to the chamber of the Loved One whose Servants they had sent away.

— What is come over you, our children?
Why do you sit opposite each other
like an old man and wife?

— O my mother and my father,
my knowing, agèd father,
my law-giver in all things:
After you sent the seven groomsmen
out of my bedroom
all went forth; the door shut,
and my husband raised the canopy.
Then someone came through the door
(though the door did not open before
he laid himself on the bed [him)
and motioned us apart to sit on chairs.

They found that instead of Thomas and Jesus Christ with him, the anti-Christ alone had entered the bridal chamber and had left a curse on the bed.

His kindly eyes reproved us,
and what he then said is now repeated
as, behind these mirrors, [round me,
all which has passed before their sur-
might be repeated. [faces
"Keep in mind, my children,
"what the Apostle said;
"and to whom he entrusted your love
"—the Everlasting Arms.
"And this know—that if you refuse
this thing
"you become the double temple
"of virtue unweakened by act."

—I was told it was not a bad act, I said.
It is the seed of children,
as my mother told me.

"The child destroys the parent.
"Beget one child, and you beget many sins.
"For its sake, you will tell yourselves,
"(though truly it will be for your own pride)
"you envy widows and rob orphans.
"(Your sin will hurt others; it will hurt you more.)

"Beget many children, and you beget many ills;
"of many children,
"some are bound to be moon-struck, some half-witted;
"some unable to walk;
"some not to hear; some not to speak;
"or unable to see.

"Even if all be wholesome
"some will be good-for-nothing — shiftless, perverse;
"some will be adulterers, murderers, thieves, or
"some secretly — some even openly;— [bestial;
"and you — struck down in the sight of all.

"Mine are the pitying hands
"which shield your backs from the flail,
"and catch you up from life,
"and wipe away your tears.

"Touch not this unclean thing —
"pain will not touch you.
"You will never be cast down.
"You shall bear invisible children
"who shall ever look to the marriage
"of virgin Truth, undefiled by thought.
"You and these children —
"mankind, and all mankind's ideals
"shall enter to the Bridegroom's bed!"

— When we heard this, we believed.
And sat here on our chairs all night.

— Children! You show us sorrow
at the hour we looked to see joy.
Do you not love one another?

— I love my wife with a pure love!
— I love my husband greatly.
I shall go on being in love always;
and always hold my husband to my love.

— Is it for that purpose, daughter,
that you now sit naked before him?

— The mirror of shame is clouded before me, mother;
never again can my body abash my husband.
I am subject neither to pleasure nor to passion,
since neither pleasure nor passion is to be found in me.
My mind is free from lewdness and bitterness of heart;
I am cheerful — very cheerful, and I am happy;
I shall go down to the grave
able to say, "I have always been very happy."

— Speak up, man, tell her
she will go to her grave a fool.

— I hold this husband of mine as of no account, father.
I have lost all memory of my marriage to this lover.
I have joined myself in a marriage which is different,
to another, different, lover; — my soul's twin.

— Are you turned entirely to a woman, my young man,
that you answer our daughter while she speaks,
and continue, though she continues,
your voice rising shriller and shriller?
— Thanks to the Lord
who is shown forth in me,
freed of the disease,
healed of the wound,
slow to heal,
cleaned of the illness,

hard to make well—
called love!
The earthly manure is lifted away
from the young, green shoot of the lively seed.

God shows himself to me
as though in a mirror
where I looked to see myself stand!

—True gods, my son, are to be seen
not in ourselves, but in other men.
This is the Law whereunder the Eternal
incarnates itself in Time.

—From Time, God sets me free,
yet finds me worthy to go on living forever.
He brings me back from falling,
and leads me to higher places.
Oh, God, Thou didst lower Thyself
to unite me with Thee.
I shall search myself out
and know what I was and all I am now
that I may, again, be as I was before.
Indeed I was not myself,
but Thou, God, whom I knew not,
showeth me to myself.
Love flameth so in me
it burneth what I want to say.
All I tell of my love
is only a little song.
Love findeth no fault in me
that I cannot think hard thoughts,

for Love loveth little thoughts
as Love loveth little children —
and it is Love, it is Love
that singeth my little love song.

— Go out quick round the town,
get me that man whom I led with mine own hand
into mine house to bless mine only daughter.
When you have him, tear him in two,
as I tear my robe.
But first, flay his skin from him
and rub in vinegar, with salt.
See that you rend him before these children,
whom he sundered.

With this miscarriage of the Gospel, the Apostle left port and continued whither he had been sent.

— The Jew has left town.
— A sail passed just now the farthest [harbor.
We sought him high and low,
but found only the flute girl, patting the dog
and gazing where the Morning Star had [faded.
— She was weeping.

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

EIGHTH DECLAMATION

HOW different, Anthony, are the nights now, when I walk alone, from those of my love for Florence in the city. How different in particular from that Walpurgis night of my exceptionally morbid cunning, when I arranged without your foreknowledge that the two of you should share the dark together. On dim, deserted streets I hurried through a city of eyes, under the constant surveillance of disparate objects which, as I passed, each transferred me to the supervision of the next. And there were real eyes among them, eyes of the cats that paused to note me with distrust and crouched in balls behind their faces. As though a convocation of demons were met to deliberate the next step in my conduct, and as though much heated disagreement were followed by their unanimous acclaiming of a policy for me, after many hours of bafflement I suddenly felt some desire other than to continue this insensate movement. I would go, I told myself, and batter at my own door until you came to admit me. I would make my way as in a trance to Florence — and regardless of her attire I would kneel before her. But as I hesitated at the sill without knocking, I found a packet of refuse I had earlier placed here — and in the barren hallway I lay down beside it. Such is the grotesqueness of suffering, that I lay beside this refuse. Then I went quietly away, and all beyond the door was left silent and enigmatic.

Now that this trouble's molten fluids lie buried beneath a crust of melancholy, my walks in the night are short interims between study and sleep. I recapitulate the day, to guaranty the soundness of my investments, be they in lands, cattle, or

family. I inspect the remaining centrifugalities of my character, questioning my present anchorage, and in the interests of protection attempting to foresee what possible events could again leave me disorbited.

This dampened moodiness, this confining of the horizon to my own hills, this blankness of the future — could I not, if differently schooled, wholly accept them as placidity? The frog from which portions of the brain have been abstracted, leaps at each prodding and croaks when caressed — the frog I believe is happy. Similarly we would drop things from us, to reach haven by a lessening. Yet I am aware that the very caution of our life makes possible some speculative latitude, and that protest, disappearance, abandonment will form the substance of our speculations: we may recognize such gnarling of our past that we must maintain equilibrium by leaning.

Ah, one will scheme for his composure. Though none but tainted men contemplate suicide and madness, a certain immunity may result from sufficient consideration of these destinies. It is useful to have contained some morbidity during the keener expectations of our early years, since we learn to bargain for continuance and balance at a time when hopefulness flows strongest. And when later experiences threaten to overwhelm us, it is as though, having gone mad or killed ourselves before, we could profit by the skill of our past error. Few would perish by their own hand if they waited a fortnight — and surely no one will fall victim to a form of insanity which he abhors. Still, one fears destruction less when he has completed his samplings and knows that he has had a little of all that others have had in great quantity.

By what justice, Anthony, do I write these pages as though destined for your perusal, when in their very composition I find myself relieved of the desire to address you? We both

share the certainty of words — and one who is at work while his neighbours slumber needs no external sanction for his trade, assured that even a philosophy of despair may, in its couching, become an ornament to living. I dare pursue these difficulties, knowing that what can cross the mind of one man can be the life-long preoccupation of another, and what can be the life-long preoccupation of one man can become the dominant concern of whole eras and peoples. I would have you join me in lauding the pressure of speech. Consider Arouet, by nature fawning, open to any bribe, currying the favour of any despot, limiting flattery solely by the measure of his auditor's credulousness, bending to any opportunity, renouncing any principle, yet undoing whole months of sycophancy by a sudden flash of wit, for he could stifle a remark which he considered too malicious, unless he also considered it clever. Each time he retorted to avenge an insult, his words were of so pointed a nature that the general structure of the state would groan. It was not his venom, but his accuracy, that aroused the persecution of the court — a splutterer might even have been lovable. It was not his bravery, but his phrasing, that made him intransigent.

A gift is an imperative; a power is a command. It is the successful at love who burn for women, and the articulate who are driven by the need of statement. I would proclaim the musculature of diction. I have seen men of practical accomplishments, harsh in their detestation of thought, who would have terrified me as monsters, and cowed me as powers, did they not proudly display some pun, sickly but of their own making, and insist that their companions show delight in it. There is not one of them but would be an adept at repartee, and withal not one of them but is unfit to apply the sound epithet to a single item of God's universe. I will not allow

these weaklings of art to enjoy a jot of self-respect beyond their skill as drudges. He who is impatient of reading, who cannot trace coexistent melodies, who perceives no vast authority in a brush-stroke, is no dog, for he lacks the keen scent of dogs. Whatever our humilities, let them vanish in the presence of such opponents, who merit no encouragement until they have grovelled. Yet I have often left my position unavowed, aware that the self-appointed champions of difficult causes usually display few virtues beyond their devotion, and by their raw urgency will enlist further enmity for the things they advocate.

On my score I have dared quarrel with art, regretting the effectiveness of silence, and of that trickery whereby the sentence most trivial in itself is made weightiest by the assistance of plot — as when a little girl should say, "See, the red poppy is in bloom," saying this as an observation of no importance, merely out of pleasure with the flower's suddenness, though the reader knows from past disclosures in the text that the blooming of this poppy is to mark her own death. Thinkers, in the codifying of their passions, leave the unthinking with a deceptive nomenclature for preferences. Men of intensity, dismayed at their excess, find formulae for its cancellation, and these formulae are taught to the middling. From whatever point of view we choose to classify mankind, people will fall into at least two opposing groups; and thus for half of them the world's best doctrine will be subversive. So we would hold that wisdom itself remains a jungle, and that the most astute exhortation can fall upon the wrong ears.

Yet have not the most menacing foes of art been its adherents? For if they are not worse than other men, their greater expressiveness makes their vices more apparent. They are treacherous, more treacherous than a loyalist's dreams, for

often their familiarity with one another is founded upon too flimsy a basis. They are to be listened to, however, as their unwholesome manner of living gives them an advantage in style over those whose environment is less exceptional. Untouched by compromise, the most ineffectual of them will pardon no lack of greatness in his acquaintances, nor forgive its presence. Yet when they condemn a colleague, they do so not wholly through malice but partly in the effort to keep from repeating him. And often, before this exile, I have heard them, fresh from their failure to write a sonnet, proclaiming the futility of all culture.

It is, rather, the scholars I would solicit, humble voyagers bewildered in that jungle of wisdom which I have mentioned, equally incompetent in life and among the archives. One I have met since coming here, with an absurdly kindly face, as in some comic drawing of a fruit or vegetable which, by the artist's addition of arms and legs and a few crude lines of physiognomy, recommends itself more to our sympathies than our appetites. "Raised in an atmosphere of piety," he confided, "denied the correctives of vulgar witticism which are needed to keep the mind of a child wholesome while it is being taught a code of the unclean, I early possessed a structure of theological thinking which left me little desire for companions of my own years. Indeed, my life was given an unreal consistency, for my parents were too scrupulous in their upbringing of me to permit themselves those moments of anger or injustice which would have provided me a sounder schooling. One's childhood should be a closer duplicate of the adult world, should be this later world in miniature — and my parents would have done me greater benefit had they been less exemplary. For my misdeeds I was reprimanded, as neither my mother nor my father would allow themselves to relax

in my discipline, and for my accomplishments I was rewarded, with the result that I faced the future with no notion of the tentative nature of our living.

"I will not pause now to explain the perilous years during which I struggled to adjust this early equipment to a world so tragically different. Not only would the account of them be inessential to the story I am about to tell you, but also they were so noxious that they seem by a purposive forgetfulness to have been crowded from the memory. Whereas some things are locked too deeply for avowal, others may be sunk even beyond recollection.

"After the dangers of madness had been miraculously weathered — and only weathered, I believe, by such accidents as a change of scene at the proper moment, or the failure to receive a certain letter, or the death of a dear relative under absurd circumstances— I met a quiet woman of twenty, Margaret, of pious parentage like myself, and equally timid. Though I had by now turned to the most godless of philosophies, and looked upon myself as the negation of my former training, I soon discovered how much faith within me was still pleading for corroboration, as I had come imperceptibly to place upon Margaret the full burden of these earlier responsibilities, exalting her, and even inspiring her, with theological terms of praise.

"We had gone far in this difficult probing of sensitivity, and both her health and my own, I believe, were being impaired by the strain of our restrictions, when this idyll suffered the irruption of a man who had no patience with such rarity, and perhaps did not even suspect its presence. He was much older, but possessed a certain physical obviousness, and had about him such an air of the expectant as to awaken in those he particularly cared to please, the suggestion of futurity. They

would not ask themselves, 'What is our relationship today?' but 'This relationship — what will it be subsequently?' With others I enjoyed his heartiness, his muscular manner, his wilful judgments, made abrupt and youthful by good health and previous successes.

"I am not competent to describe the change which came over me. But a new factor had arisen, or something asleep had been awakened. My love for Margaret, as I had known it, was gone, and in its place I experienced a kind of harshness. Painfully engrossed, yet expert with a new slyness, I watched her transformation at the call of this man. Under the guise of conversational levity, I noted their blazing eyes, their alert bodies, their flood of witty interchange. During banter on the surface harmless, I observed her, tranquil under months of our subtle courtship, now made hectic with consent. The man left soon afterwards, so that the crisis did not spread beyond the sphere of the hypothetical. But within a week I too had gone — for that undefined groping of our past could not be restored, and I was not enough the schemer to adopt the tactics of my rival. Yet the incident left me strangely envenomed, and it was many years before I could see that I myself had been at fault."

After a considerable silence, the gloom dropped from him. He faced me briskly, and I saw that he was about to speak with encouragement. "I believe the day will come," and he was prophesying, "when all these disturbances are over, when two people are no more set apart from other men by love than they are by speech, or happiness, or music. The day will come when affection is shared as we now share the elements, when universal gentleness takes precedence over the fierce predilection of one person for another. The day will come —" and at this point his voice became inaudible. Then, with a new be-

ginning: "But will the day come? For people are set apart by art or happiness, just as one interrupts for a moment his exaltation in a concert hall to glance with scorn at a restless neighbour. And we share the elements not through virtue, but merely due to imperfections in our ways of ownership. Could sunlight be deflected, the countries of the vanquished would lie in darkness. I mean thereby that we cannot have the softness of great insight, the pardon before offence, made constant. The day, and here I would revise my statement, will never come."

He wept, and I saw that he had wept seldom, for his whole body bespoke weeping—and in its surrender was repulsive as the distorted features partially hidden by his arm. Finally, "As a test of unhappiness," he resumed, "imagine what manner of life one would impose upon himself were he expiating some great wrong or striving to obtain forgetfulness. Picture existence as it would become under such a theoretical burden, and you will picture the daily habits of us all."

I cherish such meetings, when each man puts his wares upon the table for the other to observe and value. Even while hearing little beyond one's own old soliloquies, he profits by the alterations which a new auditor imposes upon his rehearsal. However, the two of us have since avoided each other, for both realized that in our first discussion he had brought forth everything he considered of moment, had given me the best cullings of a life which was, in its total, dreary and inarticulate. I respected him for his ability to exhaust himself thus rapidly, for though a greater power of multiplication would have brought him more comfort, his aridness contributed to his accuracy.

KENNETH BURKE

THE CROW BECOMES DISCURSIVE

THE grain is rotting on the stalks.
Still that beggar waves his arms to scare me away.
There is an air of loneliness about him.
At night he is lonelier still
gazing at the black line across the sky
of me and my kind going steadily to the rookery.

Autumn has ruffled my feathers.
If my voice is not hoarser than it was
something gone from the air makes it seem so.
The beginning chill of autumn disturbs me.
I must sit on the fence with my head turned sidewise and think.
I watch other birds departing.
I wonder. Why do we crows always linger?

Other autumns have been and gone.
It is always the same story. Always the same.

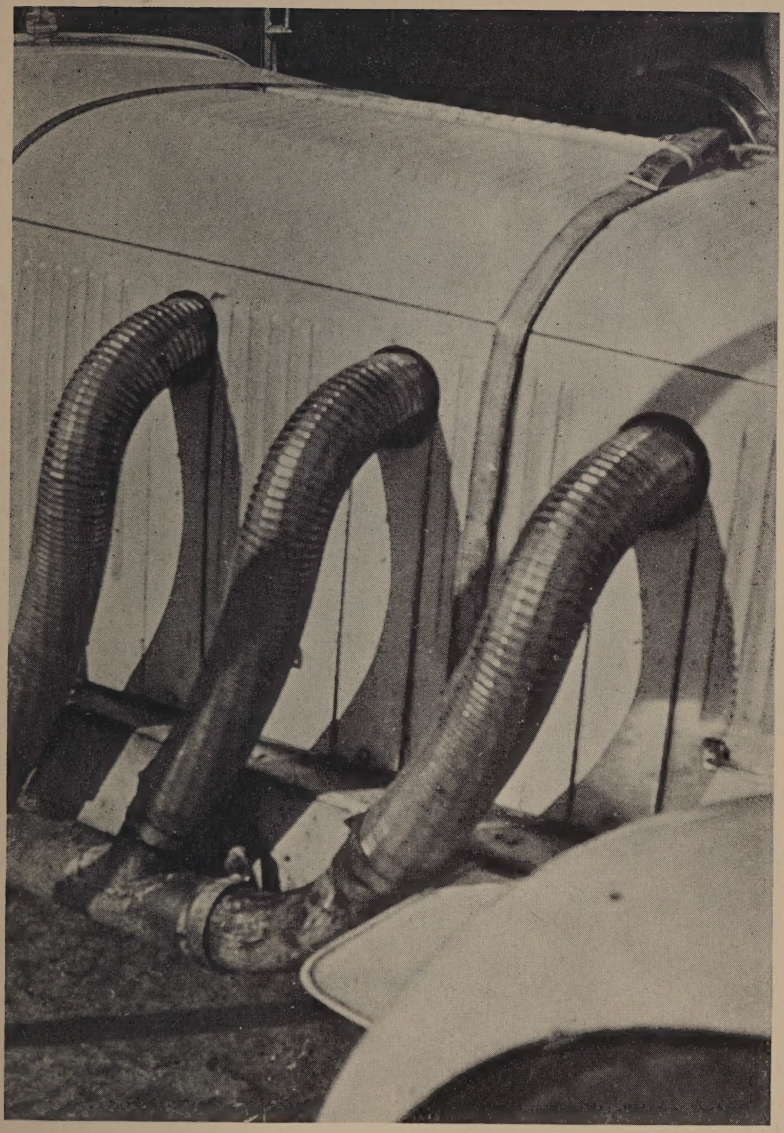
As I fly the shadow on the ground which runs after me
is longer than usual. On snow patches it brightens.

It is nightfall. I will fly to the rookery.
I will caw forlornly. It is fitting.
A black line of crows across the sky, harsh calls in the air,
and autumn with winter near and no corn upon the stalks.

ROBERT MCALMON

Still Life

Harry Crosby



Racing Car

Harry Crosby

Jockey

Harry Crosby

HAWTHORNE

MR. LLOYD MORRIS'S recent biography of Hawthorne[1] is a work of genuine merit and deserves the attention which a serious study of Hawthorne's genius should attract. As a biography it belongs to the modern school of "biography made easy"—it "runs as lightly as a novel," never halting to make a footnote or support a fact. When it is well done, there is no valid objection to this method; we take the biographer on trust and he presents us, after much labour and deliberation, with a work of art which is, in effect, the outcome of a sound judgment, a skilful control of material, and a scientific probity. It is true that Mr. Julian Hawthorne, the son of the novelist, has accused Mr. Morris[2] of distorting his father's character in essential particulars; he was robust and "commonsensical," whereas Mr. Morris has made him a very Gentle Fanny, anæmic, morbid and mysterious. But though we must give due weight to a son's impression of his father's personality, we must also remember that nowhere is a man so hidden as in his own family circle, and that the character he wears habitually in other men's eyes is often very different from the personality he creates within himself. Mr. Morris sees, not a body that moves and speaks in the daily round of life, but a mind whose real dwelling was in the remoter world of fancy and whose speech was certain works of art; and in his attempt to portray that more essential Hawthorne he has our sympathy and a good deal of our admiration.

That Hawthorne was not quite the breezy man of the world

[1] *The Rebellious Puritan. Portrait of Mr. Hawthorne.* By Lloyd Morris. London and New York, 1928.

[2] *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 16, 1927.

of his son's idealization is proved, if need be, by the curious fascination which he exercised on minds so perceptive and so worthy of him as Emerson and Melville. Emerson was impressed by "the painful solitude of the man," yearned for his intimate friendship, but felt a barrier of "unwillingness and caprice." Hawthorne, we know, had a deep scorn for all metaphysical reasoning; he "admired Emerson as a poet of deep beauty and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher." "For myself," he wrote in *The Old Manse*, "there had been epochs of my life when I, too, might have asked of this prophet the master word that should solve me the riddle of the universe; but now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put." Hawthorne, we feel, was a greater man than Emerson; he held to some truth that gave him the mastery and the inevitable scorn. Herman Melville's cry was deeper. "Whence come you, Hawthorne? By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips — lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the Bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling." Hawthorne recoiled from the intensity of Melville's conception of friendship; perhaps, Mr. Morris suggests, he did not understand it. "He was incapable of sharing the ecstasies and pangs which their relations yielded to Melville. No doubt he desired neither ecstasies nor pangs. No doubt he desired only peace." Hawthorne had no more liking for mysticism than for metaphysics, but in his rejection of Melville we cannot be equally sure of the rightness of his attitude. It does not go without saying that Hawthorne was the greater man. The greater artist, yes; but Melville's "divine magnanimities" encompassed far more than Hawthorne's equanimity. In Hawthorne, simple happi-

ness; in Melville, the "profoundest sense of being." "Ineffable socialities are in me. . . It is a strange feeling — no hopefulness is in it, no despair. Content — that is it; and irresponsibility; but without licentious inclination."

Hawthorne's happiness was perhaps due to nothing more than the simplicity of his life. It is not fair (to this extent I agree with Mr. Julian Hawthorne) to call him a Puritan, even a rebellious one. In no sense is his art what the psychologists call a compensation — in no sense a reaction to environment or education, a working-off of repressions, a rationalization of fixed ideas. Hawthorne was born with a lively sensibility and that freedom of mind which best conduces to a temperate art; and there seems to have been no attempt to interfere with his natural development. The only necessities that ever seriously galled him were economic. He led a strangely secluded life in his adolescent years, but not stranger than that of any youth of his temperament born into the dreary waste of provincial life. His defects (which have often the appearance of being inhibitions) are really defects of education — as is most obviously shown in his aversion, later in life, to the nude statues he found everywhere about him in Rome. His remark that "man is no longer a naked animal; his clothes are as natural to him as his skin, and sculptors have no more right to undress him than to flay him," strikes us with the force of its crudity rather than its prudery. It was not so much a "strange, vague, long-dormant heritage of his strait-laced Puritan ancestry" as a simple lack of experience. There is surely plenty of evidence in his writings (in the descriptions of Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*, for example) to show that the sensuous elements in nature appealed to him in a normal way. Except that the Puritan was an integral part of the historical consciousness which he set himself out

to portray, it is difficult to see how the label ever came to be applied so freely to Hawthorne. Actually he was the very antithesis of a Puritan.

It has already been observed that he was no mystic, and was, if anything, repelled by mysticism. But he was absorbed in something which is often confused with mysticism — in mystery or mysteriousness. And this fact is really the key to his character, if we can arrive at an understanding of it. There is in *Our Old Home* a passage which gives us a clue. In itself the passage is a remarkable anticipation of more recent interpretations of Gothic art. Hawthorne is describing Lichfield Cathedral:

"To my uninstructed vision, it seemed the object best worth gazing at in the whole world; and now, after beholding a great many more, I remember it with less prodigal admiration only because others are as magnificent as itself. The traces remaining in my memory represent it as airy rather than massive. A multitude of beautiful shapes appeared to be comprehended within its single outline; it was a kind of kaleidoscopic mystery, so rich a variety of aspects did it assume from each altered point of view, through the presentation of a different face, and the rearrangement of its peaks and pinnacles and the three battlemented towers, with the spires that shot heavenward from all three, but one loftier than its fellows. Thus it impressed you at every change, as a newly created structure of the passing moment, in which yet you lovingly recognized the half-vanished structure of the instant before and felt, moreover, a joyful faith in the indestructible existence of all this cloudlike vicissitude. A Gothic cathedral is surely the most wonderful work which mortal man has yet achieved, so vast, so intricate, and so profoundly simple, with such strange, delightful recesses in its grand

figure, so difficult to comprehend within one idea, and yet all so consonant that it ultimately draws the beholder and his universe into its harmony. It is the only thing in the world that is vast enough and rich enough.

"Not that I felt, or was worthy to feel, an unmingled enjoyment in gazing at this wonder. I could not elevate myself to its spiritual height, any more than I could have climbed from the ground to the summit of one of its pinnacles. Ascending but a little way, I continually fell back and lay in a kind of despair, conscious that a flood of uncomprehended beauty was pouring down upon me, of which I could appropriate only the minutest portion. After a hundred years, incalculably as my higher sympathies might be invigorated by so divine an employment, I should still be a gazer from below and at an awful distance, as yet remotely excluded from the interior mystery. But it was something gained, even to have that painful sense of my own limitations, and that half-smothered yearning to soar beyond them."

This sense of an almost giddy vertiginous gulf between human finiteness and the infinity of the Absolute, whether in art or in religion, is the peculiar Northern or Gothic sensibility; and Hawthorne is a very pure representative of it. Nevertheless, he might well feel the painful sense of his own limitations at the sight of a Gothic cathedral, because this sense of the finite and the infinite, and of the infinite in the finite, can only be expressed through the access of an emotional force such as comes from an organized and universal religion. Hawthorne, of course, lacked this support, and fell back on that substitute which has proved a weariness to so many of his readers — symbolism. It is quite extraordinary how large a part this method of expression plays in his work. The greater number of his short stories and the four longer

romances are either built around a symbol or liberally strewn with symbolic illustrations. The frequent introduction of mesmerism and spiritualism as factors in the plot merely shows the contagion of contemporary enthusiasms, and is a warning of how psycho-analysis in modern fiction may strike a reader fifty years hence. But the symbolism of which *The Scarlet Letter* is the most familiar example cannot so easily be dismissed. Or, at least, to dismiss it is to dismiss the essential quality of Hawthorne's art.

This quality was well described by Henry James in that biography of Hawthorne which is such a significant document in modern criticism, as an "element of cold and ingenious fantasy," and was further characterized as "passionless." Henry James did not really appreciate this quality; one can hardly imagine Henry James appreciating Spenser and Bunyan, who are its great exemplifiers. He remarks with reference to *The Scarlet Letter*, that "the absence of a certain something warm and straightforward, a trifle more grossly human and vulgarly natural, which one finds in *Adam Blair*, will always make Hawthorne's tale less touching to a large number of even very intelligent readers, than a love story told with the robust, synthetic pathos which served Lockhart so well." This was written in 1879, early in James's own career; and by the irony of events this is just the sort of criticism which is now being levelled against James's own later work. In fact, though he hardly realized it, James moved in his later years very near to the "cold and ingenious fantasy," the "passionless" quality of Hawthorne's tales; for what but allegories, revolving round symbols, are such novels as *The Golden Bowl*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Ivory Tower?* The difference, we would hazard, is merely one of the degree of intelligence involved. Is it possible that the

cause determining the form was the same in both cases?

Let us further characterize this form as two-dimensional. It lacks the third dimension of depth, or passion. Hawthorne, who was well aware of the limits of his talent (and this has a great deal to do with his strength) observed of his *Twice-Told Tales* that

"They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade — the coolness of a meditative habit, which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion, there is sentiment; and even in what purport to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood, as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. Whether from lack of power, or an unconquerable reserve, the Author's touches have often an effect of tameness; the merriest man can hardly contrive to laugh at his broadest humour; the tenderest woman, one would suppose, will hardly shed warm tears at his deepest pathos. The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written; if opened in the sunshine, it is apt to look exceedingly like a volume of blank pages."

And in another place Hawthorne confesses that his native propensities were towards Fairy Land.

All these self-descriptions are meant modestly enough, but they should not be taken as disparagements. Hawthorne's art belongs to that order of fancy which was defined by Coleridge as "a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space," and as having "no other counters to play with but fixities and definites." Rather than disparage such works of fantasy, we should respect them as giving free play to the intelligence. Here alone in the world of fiction can the mind

range unobstructed by emotion; and here, surely, is the possibility of an art as universal and as indestructible as the "cloud-like vicissitudes" of Gothic architecture. Its very passionless quality, moreover, assures it of that objectivity which is the aim and distinction of all classical art; and objectivity was a characteristic which Henry James, without these considerations in mind, noted in Hawthorne's writing. It is precisely this objectivity which saves his treatment of Puritanism from any suggestion of inner compulsion.

But we must press this matter farther, to ask how it came about that Hawthorne developed this particular type of art — whether, in other words, there was any compulsion determining the actual quality of his art. This involves us in a very delicate, a very significant, and a very complex problem. It can be briefly stated in words which Henry James used in this connection, and which may stand as a text for the whole debate — "that the flower of art blooms only where the soil is deep, that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion." Henry James himself took this text very much to heart; it was the dilemma he himself had to solve, and Hawthorne was the terrible warning he always kept before his eyes. For his definite conclusion was that Hawthorne's art had suffered, and suffered disastrously, irremediably, from the thinness and insipidity of the atmosphere he had been compelled to live in. There is no doubt that in the panic induced by his own situation Henry James tended to depreciate too much the quality of Hawthorne's work. Above all, he failed to appreciate at its true value what we might call Hawthorne's provincialism. Whatever America of today may be, New England of a hundred years ago, in spite of its political independence, was spiritually an outer province of the British

Isles. Now a province, though it lacks many of the positive virtues of a metropolis, has some rather negative virtues of its own. It is more confined in its outlook, but tends to send its roots deeper into the soil with which it is, moreover, in directer contact. Much of the best of our literature is essentially provincial — Sterne and the Brontës, and even Wordsworth. But, Henry James would have objected, provincial or not, these authors had a background, whereas in America "no State, in the European sense of the word, and indeed barely a specific national name. No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors, nor old country-houses, nor parsonages, nor thatched cottages nor ivied ruins; no cathedrals, nor abbeys, nor little Norman churches; no great Universities nor public schools — no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class — no Epsom nor Ascot!"

"What was left?" cried Henry James. "Why simply the whole of life," retorted Howells in a review of *Hawthorne*. James's own answer was that "the American knows that a good deal remains; what it is that remains — that is his secret, his joke, as one may say. It would be cruel, in this terrible denudation, to deny him the consolation of his national gift, that 'American humour' of which of late years we have heard so much."

This is altogether too scornful. It is true that this same "humour" is still the most trying feature of American writing. Facetiousness is the greatest blemish on Hawthorne's style; it is almost everywhere, and but for its presence Hawthorne would rank with a select company of four or five of our purest writers. An essay like *The Old Manse*, descriptive writing

such as is found in *Our Old Home* (surely the best book on England ever written by an American), and, occasionally, intense nervous narrative such as he gives us in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Blithedale Romance*—these cannot be matched by anything visibly dependent on Eton or Ascot. We will quote two examples:

"He spoke languidly, and only those few words, like a watch with an inelastic spring, that just ticks a moment or two, and stops again. He seemed a very forlorn old man. In the wantonness of youth, strength, and comfortable condition — making my prey of people's individualities, as my custom was — I tried to identify my mind with the old fellow's, and take his view of the world, as if looking through a smoke-blackened glass at the sun. It robbed the landscape of all its life. Those pleasantly swelling slopes of our farm, descending towards the wide meadows, through which sluggishly circled the brimful tide of the Charles, bathing the long sedges on its hither and further shores; the broad sunny gleam over the winding water; that peculiar picturesqueness of the scene where capes and headlands put themselves boldly forth upon the perfect level of the meadow, as into a green lake, with inlets between the promontories; the shadowy woodland, with twinkling showers of light falling into its depths; the sultry heat-vapour, which rose everywhere like incense, and in which my soul delighted, as indicating so rich a fervour in the passionate day, and in the earth that was burning with its love;— I beheld all these things as through old Moodie's eyes. When my eyes are dimmer than they have yet come to be, I will go thither again, and see if I did not catch the tone of his mind aright, and if the cold and lifeless tint of his perceptions be not then repeated in my own."

This shows very exact observation, and a careful, conscious

use of words, a subtle sense of rhythm. In the second passage, also from *The Blithedale Romance*, we have the same objectivity applied to a narrative of action:

"We floated past the stump. Silas Foster plied his rake manfully, poking it as far as he could into the water, and immersing the whole length of his arm besides. Hollingsworth at first sat motionless, with the hooked pole elevated in the air. But, by and by, with a nervous and jerky movement, he began to plunge it into the blackness that upbore us, setting his teeth, and making precisely such thrusts, methought, as if he were stabbing at a deadly enemy. I bent over the side of the boat. So obscure, however, so awfully mysterious, was that dark stream, that —and the thought made me shiver like a leaf—I might as well have tried to look into the enigma of the eternal world, to discover what had become of Zenobia's soul, as into the river's depths, to find her body. And there, perhaps, she lay, with her face upward, while the shadow of the boat, and my own pale face peering downward, passed slowly betwixt her and the sky!

"Once, twice, thrice, I paddled the boat up stream, and again suffered it to glide, with the river's slow, funereal motion, downward. Silas Foster had raked up a large mass of stuff, which, as it came towards the surface, looked somewhat like a flowing garment, but proved to be a monstrous tuft of water-weeds. Hollingsworth, with a gigantic effort, upheaved a sunken log. When once free of the bottom, it rose partly out of the water—all weedy and slimy, a devilish-looking object, which the moon had not shone upon for half a hundred years—then plunged again, and sullenly returned to its old resting-place, for the remnant of the century."

But it would be impossible to quote a line further, because facetiousness, in the shape of Silas Foster, stalks all through

this otherwise magnificent chapter. Perhaps it would have been juster to quote that other midnight scene, from *The Scarlet Letter*, where Dimmesdale mounts the scaffold where Hester had suffered ignominy; for in that scene Hawthorne's descriptive powers reach an intensity he never equalled elsewhere. But then this scene dissolves into supernatural manifestations of symbolic import which, in their context, have an effect of triviality or irrelevance. It is but another aspect, the serious aspect, of the phenomenon of oblique reference. Whether as humour or as allegory, this phenomenon is the same in all American writers: they walk all round the circumference of a subject and imagine they have been at the centre. Was this not the very quality which Henry James brought with him to Europe and instead of surrendering, merely transmuted into intellectual forms? That, at any rate, is the superficial aspect of his genius.

This phenomenon, however, is merely a question of style. On the question of substance I must hark back to Hawthorne's provincialism, and insist that here was a positive colour, a depth, a density — something of an integrity worth cultivating. It was a tender growth, but how vivid! We might with pleasure turn oftener to the literary charm, the historical interest, the delicate fantasy with which Hawthorne evokes the New England scene, the New England past, the New England character. It is all so authentic; and if in his devotion to it Hawthorne sacrificed the finer graces of ancient culture and the surer power of established tradition, who shall say what the alternative would have cost in moral questionings — the alternative being, as Henry James was to demonstrate, expatriation. It is perhaps not a general question at all — not a question about which the critic has a right to generalize. We can only observe the dilemma, observe that Hawthorne and

Henry James solved it in different ways, and wonder whether a gain in æsthetic values is full compensation for a loss in moral virtue. That there was a third, and a desperate, solution is proved by the case of Poe, who impaled himself on the horns of the dilemma. He could neither accept for good or ill the provincialism he lived among, nor make the necessary effort to escape from it.

This quality in Hawthorne which I have described as provincialism — his particular atmosphere or essence — and the beautiful prose in which it finds expression — these would not in themselves have sufficed to give Hawthorne the high position he occupies in English literature. The heart also was involved. In his Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (Hawthorne's prefaces are as important as Henry James's) he once again shows us that he knew all the time what he was about:

"When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is presumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former — while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart — has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation."

"The truth of the human heart" is perhaps what Howells meant by the whole of human life. It is a sentimental phrase, of course, and Henry James might have argued that the heart can be as impoverished as the body and the mind by a

waste environment. Perhaps they can, in an abstract and very evolutionary sense. But it would be obvious nonsense to deny to the New Englander of the nineteenth century, above all to one of such refined sensibilities as Hawthorne, the fullest gamut of human emotions. And where there are emotions there can be tragedy, and all the forms of literature leading up to tragedy. No one has seriously contended that the inhabitants of America are without Original sin — if we may assume the validity of that very necessary dogma; and where there is Original sin there also is an original sense of values; and art, especially the art of the novelist, is the working out of such a sense of values. From this point of view two clauses of Henry James's text prove false; neither a deep soil nor a long history is a condition essential for art; and the remaining clause, that it needs a complex social machinery to set a writer in motion, is merely a relative condition. Hawthorne was obviously set in motion, so presumably the simple machinery of New England society was adequate in that sense; and though lack of encouragement and lack of appreciation may finally defeat the strongest creative impulse, this impulse in itself is a subjective phenomenon. In so far as art is original (and that is the last essential test of art), it is innate, and independent of social categories. It is only the socialization of art — the process by means of which the art is made available for the community through structures like the epic, the drama and the novel — it is only this process which suffers from the absence of a tradition. The poet is then apt to write for himself, or for some ideal futurity, and to be so much the less universal.

Hawthorne, however, wrote for the New England society of his time, and his art is admirably proportioned to the nature of this community. It was, above all, a very self-

conscious community. It took itself very seriously — not only in the sense that it deliberately cultivated its newly founded nationality and was already on the lookout for national heroes and national poets, but also in the sense that it tried very hard to behave itself in the eyes of the world. It was preoccupied especially with moral problems; and in making these the concern of his writing, Hawthorne was consciously or unconsciously taking advantage of whatever virtue of depth there was in the immature society around him. The Puritan conscience might at first glance seem an unpromising subject for the delicate visionary that Hawthorne in his early tales had shown himself to be; but his gift of objectivity enabled him to play lightly with the heaviest of materials. "He continued," as Henry James expressed it, "by an exquisite process best known to himself, to transmute this heavy moral burden into the very substance of the imagination, to make it evaporate in the light and charming fumes of artistic production."[3]

[3] In this connection it is interesting to compare a short story in *Twice-Told Tales* called "The Minister's Black Veil" with *The Scarlet Letter*. The theme is the same in both cases. But in "The Minister's Black Veil" the hidden remorse of the Rev. Mr. Hooper is merely symbolized in the black veil which he wears over his face, and the nature of his remorse is never known; the story remains strictly allegorical. In *The Scarlet Letter*, however, we are very soon made aware of the nature of the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale's remorse, and though we never revel in the modern manner in the details out of which the tragic situation arises, the tragedy itself is worked out on the plane of reality. The fantasy which is the predominant quality of the short tales is in the longer romances reduced to a very subordinate place, and is even then to be regretted. So great is the difference between these two phases of Hawthorne's work that we begin to wonder whether he was subject to some decisive influence at the time he wrote *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). That particular kind of intensity was then rare enough, but manifest in two novels published from a Yorkshire parsonage in 1847. The great similarity between the characters of Chillingworth and Heathcliff would support a suggestion that Hawthorne was inspired in some degree by *Wuthering Heights*; and later we find a confession scene in *The Marble Faun* (1860) closely duplicating a similar scene in *Villette* (1852). Such influences are inevitable, and in writers of independent genius such as Hawthorne they are all to the good, opening out veins which would otherwise remain

Henry James then goes on to define very exactly the nature of this transmutation:

"Nothing is more curious and interesting than this almost exclusively *imported* character of the sense of sin in Hawthorne's mind; it seems to exist there merely for an artistic or literary purpose. He had ample cognizance of the Puritan conscience; it was his natural heritage; it was reproduced in him; looking into his soul, he found it there. But his relation to it was only, as one may say, intellectual; it was not moral and theological. He played with it and used it as a pigment; he treated it, as the metaphysicians say, objectively. He was not discomposed, disturbed, haunted by it, in the manner of its usual and regular victims, who had not the little postern door of fancy to slip through, to the other side of the wall. It was, indeed, to his imaginative vision, the great fact of man's nature; the light element that had been mingled with his own composition always clung to this rugged prominence of moral responsibility, like the mist that hovers about the mountain. It was a necessary condition for a man of Hawthorne's stock that if his imagination should take licence to amuse itself, it should at least select this grim precinct of the Puritan morality for its play-ground."

This is so truly expressed that it leaves little more to be said. But Hawthorne's example is one of very wide significance, and one that can benefit a generation which is singularly confused on the subject of the relationship of morality to art. Hawthorne was a "pure" artist in the modern sense — as "pure" as Poe or Landor, Flaubert or Mallarmé. And yet he was preoccupied with moral problems — as, to a great extent, was Flaubert also. The distinction is, of course, that he did not desire a solution of them — not a solution, at any

buried. In any case, such influences are not fruitful unless there is a prior aptitude in the author influenced.

rate, on the moral plane. His scorn of the self-concentrated philanthropist, and of the meddler in other people's affairs generally, is evident everywhere — but especially in *The Blithedale Romance*, which might have been written for the express purpose of making this attitude clear. The only agent he employed in his moral dramas was the conscience; and all his romances might be described as studies in remorse, which is conscience accusing itself. The extraordinary thing, above all in *The Scarlet Letter*, is the degree of intensity with which the theme is invested. Indeed, that is the extraordinary thing about Hawthorne altogether, and the one factor which more than any other inclines us to rank him as a major artist — the capacity, that is, which he has for putting an emotional emphasis into subjects so dispassionately conceived. The resulting art is "classical," but it is reached by the reverse of the normal classical procedure of putting a rational curb on to subjects emotionally conceived. The subjects are indeed "grim," but the imagination has thrown over them its own peculiar radiance and glory.

HERBERT READ

PICUS MARTIUS

Here lies the Woodpecker, who was Zeus

THOUGHTS of the Bird-Catcher,
Who caught the Woodpecker,
Once Zeus.

Remember:
Birds in stone, birds in clay, birds on coins,
The unsubstantial feathers made substantial
In Caria and Istria and Umbria,
In memory of the Woodpecker who was Zeus.
Because God had been a bird.

God like a bird,
'The same moon in Cameroon'
In dancing-places and sleeping places and bars,
Dressed-up like a man,
A too-bright creature perched a moment on your wrist.

Birds are born again,
The unsubstantial feathers made more airy
In flesh.

Recognise a bird in a man
That it is feathers, air
Not flesh.

Catch it if you can,
Tie a thread to the transparent claw
And in the sensibility of honour
Untwist.

Sigismundo de Malatesta da Rimini
Was a master in this.
Because his name was magnificence:
Because of his pride,
Because of Madame Isotta,
Because he has nothing whatever to do with this.

Advice of the bird-catcher:
Consider;
The trouble brought by bird-lovers
On the lovers of birds
(Leda and Ganymede
Spring to the mind).
A bird-priestess wore the feathers of a king-fisher
In Elis of all places,
Next door to the palace of the Imperial patriarch Zeus-Pater,
No earthly sense in it but art.

Advice to Leda:
Ruffle your feathers out of the wood,
You cannot stay in with the bird-king.
Make your nest where you can
Lay phoenix eggs,
Turn the substantial shell to unsubstantial
Fire birds.
Meet the king who is neither a bird nor a man
In the easiest place,

Mother of the Dioscuri,
Apprentice — bird-catcher the bird picked up
To dance with and shoot craps and whistle out the night.

There is a feather-leash
From wrist to wrist,
A running-knot to tie
Those who have kissed
(Not poetry this
Pastiche on a past air.)

Il ne vient pas ce soir
(Make a tune of this)
Absent — le bien venu
Absent — le menu plaisir
De ce soir
Disparu.

Light tears of the Bird-catcher,
Who caught the Woodpecker, Picus Martius
Once Zeus.

You were an airy unsubstantial love,
But you were peace,
Peace for the Bird-catcher and his little friends
Famous in story.

Told:
Where the rocks are made of glass
And the sea of blue stone,
Where the trees are dry and grey
For bird-flash and dance,

PICUS MARTIUS

Where the fir-cone,
Ivy, briony
Trouble memory, the mother of the Muses,
The nine names of the imagination,
With a bird's feathers brushed in the moment of flight.

He said:
Steady Ganymede!
Careful Leda!
That bird was a god,
Was a man.

Zeus-Swan, Zeus-Eagle, Woodpecker-Zeus:
Old memories of the bird-catcher
Of the lovers of a bird,
And of Picus Martius
God — like — a — bird
Zeus.

MARY BUTTS

THE FALLACY OF HUMANISM

IF the necessity for virtue could tell us what it is and ensure its practice, the doctrine of the American Humanists would stand with the minimum of easy, even perfunctory revision. There is a general belief that this doctrine is fundamentally sound, and it is rejected, where it is rejected, because it is not "flexible" enough, or because it ignores contemporary literature, or because the Humanists lack the "æsthetic sense." Unhappily, however, Humanism is obscure as to its sources; it is even more ambiguous about the kind of authority to which it appeals. And yet all believers in reason, tradition, and authority, who are obviously disbelievers in impressionism, pure contemporaneity, and license — among whom this essayist numbers himself — will approach the writings of Messrs. Babbitt, More and Foerster with more than an open mind; they will have in advance the conviction that

> the rightful concern of man is his humanity, his world of value . . . that marks him off from a merely quantitative natural order;

but, after a great deal of patient reading, they will come away with that conviction — and with no more than that conviction. They will have got no specific ideas about values — that is to say, they will have gained no technique for acquiring them; and such a technique, they will reflect, is morally identical with the values themselves. Values are not suspended in the air, to be plucked. They will reflect, suspiciously, that the vague method of Humanism resembles the vague method of the so-called Romantic in the very respect in which agreement or difference is fundamental: the Humanist pursues

Humanism for its own sake — or, say, restraint for restraint's sake, or proportion for proportion's sake — and while this is doubtless better than pursuing disorder for disorder's sake, the authority of the worthier pursuit is no clearer than that of the baser. They will decide, moreover, that this defect of the Humanist is a central one and that, critically examined, it will turn out to be the philosophical malady of the so-called naturalist. Doctrinal differences in themselves may be negligible; the man who supposes himself a naturalist may practice the Humanistic virtues (Montaigne): the Humanist in doctrine may exhibit the method of naturalism (More). But if the appearance of mere doctrine is deceptive, the operation of a technique cannot be. The Humanists have no technique. How, under the special complexities and distractions of the modern world, they intend to validate their values they do not say; they simple urge them. And this discrepancy between doctrine and method their hardier readers will find adequately described in Book II, Chapter IV, of the Nicomachean Ethics:

> . . . Yet people in general do not perform these actions, but taking refuge in talk they flatter themselves they are philosophizing, and that they will so be good men: acting in truth very like those sick people who listen to the doctor with great attention but do nothing that he tells them: just as these people cannot be well bodily under such a course of treatment, neither can those be mentally by such philosophizing.

The Humanists have listened not only to one doctor but to a great many doctors, and they tell us what they say; but they have not learned, and they cannot teach us, how to take the medicine.

I propose, in the first place, therefore, to analyze the position held by those Humanists in whom the minimum of doctrine appears: I mean by the minimum of doctrine that

their thought refuses to exceed the moralistic plane; they steadily repudiate all religious and philosophical support. The Humanists of this type are Babbitt and Foerster. Secondly, I shall try to discover how this Humanism differs, if it differ, from that of Mr. More, who appears to lean heavily upon religious values. Different as the religious and the non-religious brands of Humanism seem to be, they will turn out in the end to founder on the same reef. At the last, if Humanism shall save itself — that is to say, if it shall find a method — what is the position into which it will be logically driven?

I

The Humanism formulated by Mr. Norman Foerster in the last chapter of his *American Criticism* is actually a summary of the views of Professor Babbitt. Mr. Foerster adds nothing of his own, but he is more explicit than his master has ever been; he attempts an exact definition of his authorities. He no longer leaves it to the critic to infer the points of attack. An analysis of Foerster is, then, in all the essentials, an analysis of Babbitt. The assumptions of Humanism, according to Mr. Foerster, are as follows:

(1) ". . . that assumptions are necessary." Foerster points out the self-deception of the naturalist, or the anti-authoritarian, who thinks he has got rid of assumptions.

(2) ". . . that the essential elements of human experience are precisely those which appear to conflict with the reality explored by naturism. It [Humanism] recognizes, indeed, the service of naturism . . . in showing the power of the natural man's impulses."

(3) ". . . the central assumption of humanism is that of a dualism of man and nature . . . the rightful concern of man is his humanity, his world of value and quality that marks him off from a merely quantitative natural order."

(4) "Finally, humanism assumes the freedom of the will to con-

form to a standard of values, as opposed to the deterministic assumption of naturism."

From these assumptions Mr. Foerster proceeds to a doctrine which I reproduce in an abridged form:

(1) An adequate human standard calls for *completeness*. This includes "natural" human nature.

(2) But it also calls for *proportion*: it demands the harmony of the *parts with the whole* (italics mine).

(3) The complete, proportionate standard may be said to consist of the *normally or typically human.*

(4) Although such an ethos has never existed, it has been approximated in the great ages of *the past.* Foerster looks mainly to Greece, but he includes the Romans, Vergil and Horace; the Christians, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, others; the Orientals, Buddha and Confucius; the moderns, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe. (But he has misgivings about Shakespeare.)

(5) Unlike Romanticism, Humanism is true to its Hellenic origin in its faith in *reason.* It seeks to deal positively with the whole of human experience, including those elements of experience that do *not* fall within the scope of what is termed science.

(6) Unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science, humanism seeks to press beyond reason by the use of *intuition* or *imagination* . . . the human or ethical imagination, as distinguished from the natural or pathetic imagination, which is below the reason.

(7) The ultimate ethical principle is that of restraint or control.

(8) This centre to which Humanism refers everything . . . is the reality that gives rise to religion. But pure Humanism is content to describe it *in physical terms* . . . it hesitates to pass beyond its experimental knowledge to the dogmatic affirmations of any of the great religions . . . it holds that *supernatural revelation must be tested by the intellect* . . . it should be clear that Humanism, like Greek philosophy, *begins with science* and *not* with religion.

The assumptions and the conclusions of Mr. Foerster's Humanism I have given in some detail so that the reader may, by

the merest inspection, see for himself the jungle of vague definition and contradiction in which the Humanist program is lost.

Mr. Foerster says that human values are those which *appear* to conflict (do they or do they not?) with the reality explored by naturism; and yet Humanism demands the cultivation of all human nature, including "natural" human nature. He says, too, that Humanism rejects the elements of experience that fall within the "scope of what is termed science." Can it cultivate them and reject them at the same time? However this may be, Humanism puts its faith in reason (because of its Hellenic origin) and it is based upon science, and yet it is unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science. It demands a dualism of man and nature opposed to the monistic assumption of naturism; but how, it may be asked, is this dualism to be preserved along with that other requirement of a "harmony of the parts with the whole"? Mr. Foerster has just denounced the monistic whole. And, further, it may be asked, upon which side of the duality does reason take its stand? If science is naturism, and reason science, the question answers itself. Humanism is based upon science, which is naturism, and yet it is unlike the conceptions of life that grow out of science. And here it may be asked upon which science Mr. Foerster performs his miracle of accepting rejection? Is it just *science*? Or is it a *Weltanschauung* whose vision of reality is mechanism, a popular version of genuine science? In this case, it is the quantitative natural order of which he speaks; but how did it get quantified? Is it *naturally* quantified? The only plausible answer is that it was quantified by Mr. Foerster's kind of reason, but that he is so unaware of this that he can, with an effective "chaser" handy, drink "reason" off neat.

The chaser is the "ethical imagination," which presses be-

yond reason. We have seen that he puts his faith in reason, and it is difficult to see why he wishes a faith beyond faith, or why he selects this particular super-faith: he refuses to press beyond reason in favour of religion.

His desire to go beyond reason is his desire to escape from naturalism, and his conception of reason is disastrously contradictory. The mere desire to get out of gaol will not unlock the gate, and you remain a prisoner: Mr. Foerster remains a naturalist. He says that "supernatural intuition" — the phrase smacks of romantic Bergsonism — must be tested by the intellect. This is the naturalistic, eighteenth-century "rationalistic," conception of religion: irrational constructions of reality which "reason" (naturalism) may break down and reject. When Mr. Foerster says that religion must be tested by the intellect, he therefore means by naturalism. For naturalism contains the only idea of reason that is available to the Humanist.

If this were not true, the Humanist would not be forced to exceed it. Mr. Foerster is a century behind the thought of his age: he is a romantic post-Kantian who can find no way out of mechanism except intellectual suicide. (The *thought* of the age is *not* naturalistic.) This intellectual suicide was the ethical imagination which Schiller found to be the only way out of scientism, and its origin is betrayed by Schiller's description of it as the ideal representation of Causality. The difficulty for Mr. Foerster and Schiller is the question, How is this moral imagination to get moralized? You get nowhere by saying that the ethical imagination is above the reason, the pathetic imagination below; you have first to give them a motive for being what they are; without this you have a logical hypostasy, and the above and the below become, as any professor of logic will tell you, "picture-thinking."

Mr. Foerster will have to decide to be scientifically reasonable, or not to be scientifically reasonable; whether he wants the parts to harmonize with the whole, or whether he rejects the whole for a dualism of the parts. He cannot have reason checking the natural and still keep it natural. Unless he can make up his mind, his dualism is merely verbal; for he is expecting naturalism to un-naturalize itself—or, in other words, the imagination to make itself moral.

But perhaps, after all, he has a way out: he holds an unplayed card and it may be an ace. The ultimate ethical principle is restraint or control, and the motivation of the ethical imagination is restraint; or at least it acts under the influence of restraint for the creation, it seems, of the "normally or typically human." This is the ideal towards which Humanism strives, having based its effort upon the ancient approximations to the ideal. But, if the ethical imagination is the instrument for creating the normally or typically human, what is its motive for doing so? Is it restraint? Or can you say, Because it is ethical? Or, perhaps, that the restraint restrains? This will not do. You have got to refer to certain prior conditions under which an ethical imagination is possible. However wicked the personal life of Villon may have been, his imagination, under the conditions of the time, was bound to be ethical because it had an authority for being; it could not escape this authority in some form.

These conditions are by no means fulfilled by recourse to Sophocles, to Vergil, to Augustine, or to a mixture of these writers taken alone. You cannot get out of them a "philosophy" or a "religion"; literature is no substitute for religion, or for its defence, philosophy. It is this vague understanding on the part of the Humanists of the nature of philosophy, it is their lack of an exact logical and philosophical discipline,

which betrays them not only into the muddy reasoning that we have just seen; it leads them to expect to find in literature, ancient or modern, an explicit philosophy sufficient unto itself — a philosophy, in short, that does not already exist in some purer, instead of a derived and literary form. You may as well burn the *Summa* and study Aquinas, *as Aquinas*, in Dante. The Humanist idea of philosophy and of literature is confused; and both, in their hands, as we shall see, are corrupt.

The belief held at various times since the Renaissance that the ancients are models of attitude and value was an innocent and useful delusion; it was useful so long as it was not necessary to expose it — so long, in fact, as the ancients could be assimilated to an already existing centre of authority. Without this centre you get eclecticism; you get Professor Babbitt. The sole defence of eclecticism is naturalistic — that is to say, it rests upon the ability of the individual mind mechanically to combine, upon a *tabula rasa*, a variety of unlike elements into a unity. We know that mechanical interaction (were it possible) could not yield a whole, but an aggregate. Humanism, lacking a centre, is an aggregate; it expects Sophocles and Vergil to fuse without the action of some prior principle of unity: you could as well get a philosophy out of Racine and Alexander Pope, or Coleridge and Austin Dobson. The Humanist conception of literature is mechanical and naturalistic.

Its idea of the past is infinite regression. When it is asked for authority, it is constantly driven back from one position to another. We arrive at last at the "wisdom of the ages," but are we sure that this wisdom can be assimilated, evaluated, by a mind that has no authority for being wise? Professor Babbitt is learned, and he seems to be wise, but for the latter we have only his word for it.

The idea of infinite regression to authority inheres in all

Humanist thought, and it is probably the subtlest fallacy to which it is committed. In the first place, it takes all the *time* out of the past. Obviously the Humanists do not consciously involve themselves in such an error. What they do perform is an unconscious transformation of the idea of an increasingly distant temporal past into the idea of a logical series which is quite timeless. This is another pitfall of picture-thinking: time is confused with logical succession which, of course, may run in any "direction" or all directions at once. The Humanist thus convinces himself that his logical series is a temporal past, and, as such, contains a stopping-place, some fixed doctrine, an external authority. But there can be no absolute in a logical series because all its terms are equal and it never ends. Logical series is quantitative, the abstraction of space. The temporal series is, on the other hand, space concrete; it may end, for persons in the West, with Christ. Concrete, temporal experience implies the existence of a temporal past, and it is the foundation of religion; that is to say, the only way to think of the past independently of Mr. Foerster's naturalism is to think religiously; and, conversely, the only way to think religiously is to think in time.[1] Naturalistic science is timeless.[2] A doctrine based upon it, whether explicitly or not, can have no past, no idea of tradition, no fixed authority. The "typically human" is a term that cannot exist apart from some other term; it is not an absolute; it is fluid and unfixed.

[1] Mr. Wyndham Lewis understands this, but his Time fiends are really Space fiends. If his reader will go through his books, and change Space to Time, Time to Space, he will get what Mr. Lewis really means.

[2] Mr. Foerster (*American Criticism*, p. 238, footnote) says: "Science measures . . . phenomenal happenings viewed in retrospect." Since Mr. Foerster lacks the first elementary idea of the method of science, it is no wonder that he is caught in its assumptions. The fundamental concept of natural science is the Law of Reversible Action: every natural occurrence can, under the same conditions, be repeated; events are never lost in the passing of concrete time; there are no events in retrospect or in prospect; there is simply timeless process.

The "historical method," says Mr. Foerster, rose in the age of naturalism, but he wishes to keep it as a valuable adjunct to Humanism. This may be due to his fallacy in the concept of reason; or it may be that he does not wish to embarrass the American academic system, to which he belongs. His hope, however, that Humanism may rise upon its own débris is another instance of naturalism unnaturalizing itself. Men cannot be naturalists with one half of the mind, Humanists with the other; or does Mr. Foerster desire the growth of two coöperating classes — naturalists and Humanists? The convictions of the one class are bound to undermine those of the other. The "historical method" has always been the anti-historical method. Its aim is to contemporize the past. Its real effect is to de-temporize it. The past becomes a causal series and timeless; and as a quantitative abstraction (as Foerster himself sees) valueless. Are we to infer that, after the historical naturalists have done their work, the Humanist will intercede and evaluate? This is the Victorian illusion all over again — that good may somehow be the "goal of ill."

Professor Babbitt has acutely charged the experimental moderns with not being experimental enough — they have not, he says, questioned the assumptions of their time, but swallowed them whole. He himself continues to experiment, but, as Mr. Eliot has pointed out, we cannot go on experimenting indefinitely. The reason why Professor Babbitt remains an inveterate experimenter is that he, in his turn, has not been philosophical enough. The Socratic method, which he, and Mr. Foerster after him, apply so ably to contemporary society, is a method only, and it may be used by the Humanist and his enemy alike. Torn out of the Platonic Dialogues, it is an instrument for the exposure of contradiction; it brings with it no motive for the exposure; it yields no ab-

solutes. This will be clearer in an analysis of the Humanism of Paul Elmer More.

II

If Professor Babbitt's Humanism is eclectic, Mr. More's is equally so — but the apparent synthesis takes place on the religious plane. Humanists like Babbitt and Foerster have to meet the problem of access to truth beyond the personality: it is obvious that Babbitt, in some sense, is a sound man, that his views are sound because he is; but there is no other guarantee of the soundness of his views. He is a "personality," and there is nothing to do about personality but to feel that it is sound or unsound. Mr. More, however, compels us to answer the question: Is his religion sound or unsound?

The problem is harder than that of personality, but in the end it is the same. What, in the first place, is Mr. More's religion? Is it Christianity? It is possible that it is. He has written time and again about the insight afforded us by Christian writers, and to them he has brought no inconsiderable insight of his own. There is also, according to Mr. More, a profound insight in Plato—perhaps the profoundest. Again, his studies in the Hindu religions and philosophies have stimulated him to some of his best and most sympathetic writing: the Hindus teach a deep religious dualism. Mr. More's *Studies in Religious Dualism* is a kind of breviary of the good he finds in half a dozen or more religious attitudes. The question remains: which of these religions is Mr More's? The answer to this, I believe, is: Mr. More's religion is Mr. More's.

He has written a great deal on religion, but it is not easy to put one's finger on his idea of it. The truth is simply that his explicit statements on the subject tend to be vague — some-

thing like pulpit rhetoric. And yet he does have definite ideas. But their most significant expression is in incidental remarks, when he is off his guard. About twenty years ago he took to task an interpreter of the Forest Philosophers for trying

> to convert into hard intellectualism what was at bottom a religious and thoroughly human experience.

Is intellectualism hard (or soft) incompatible with religion? If the experience was thoroughly human, was it also religious? Mr. More thinks that it was. If intellectualism has no place in religion, where does it belong? Mr. More's reply to this is undoubtedly Mr. Foerster's conception of reason: reason is the exclusive privilege of what the Humanists call naturism. Religion is an indefinite, unutterable belief. Mr. More, as well as Babbitt and Foerster, cannot get out of this notion of reason. Now, if religion is not allowed to reason, what may it do? Shall it be contented with visions? I think that Mr. More would say no; but he could not rationally say it. Mr. More repeats the dilemma (which is very different from a dualism) of Messrs. Babbitt and Foerster; you have on the one hand scientific naturalism; on the other, irrational belief — the "illusion of a higher reality"[3] which is only an illusion. This is the familiar doctrine of the *philosophe* that religion is an aberration of the intellect — an aberration of naturalism. Mr. More would say that the religious and the human join in opposing the natural. But if the religious and the human join, in the present state of the religious, you are opposing naturalism with opposition, or at best with itself. You cannot overcome naturalism with an illusion of higher reality; the illusion is a property of the thing to be overcome. In spite of Mr. More's religious attitude, the objections to Professor Bab-

[3] The phrase is Goethe's, who used it in a different sense.

bitt and Mr. Foerster apply to him. This is because Mr. More's religion is only Mr. More's.

He gives, in the first chapter of *Studies in Religious Dualism*, something of his religious history up to that time (1909). He had repudiated Calvanism; he was drifting; but suddenly he found a book that initiated him into the "mysteries of independent faith" — the kind of faith, it will be observed, that the detested romantic, the naturist, the Rousseauist, or what you will, has argued for all the time. Calvanism, it seems, was not independent enough, and yet no faith was too independent. Now, just how much independence was necessary? Mr. More had to make his decision unassisted, and he had no rational means of knowing when he had come to a stop. It comes down, I suppose, to some sort of belief in God, which Mr. More shares with the hero of *Vathek*, Lord Byron, and Shelley.[4]

[4] That this is the chief issue of Mr. More's thinking I have been able to infer from the great bulk of his miscellaneous writings on religion. The correctness of my inference is now explicitly confirmed by Mr. More himself in an essay entitled "An Absolute and an Authoritative Church," *The Criterion*, July, 1929. Mr. More, harrassed by the "Demon of the Absolute," tries to find religious authority apart from the Protestant claim of infallibility for the Biblical texts, on the one hand, and, on the other, from the Roman claim of absolute interpretation of these texts. He asks both of these absolute and presumably erring parties some very shrewd questions, which he believes to be most adequately answered by the Greek and the Anglican Churches—"the kind of revelation which neither in book nor in Church is absolute, but in both book and Church possesses a sufficient authority." I am not concerned with the merit of any Church, but with the idea of Mr. More's authority, which he fails to make clear. He admits that his idea may bring "the reproach of uncertainty," but any sensible reader will sympathize with this if Mr. More's uncertain faith also bring him consolation; and yet the sympathetic reader will have to conclude that this is only an explicit statement of his persistently "independent faith." The value of this new essay is, in short, that of a summary of Mr. More's religious thought; its distinction is the fearless and forthright honesty of his discussion; for otherwise it ends in vague appreciation of tradition tempered by individualism. The dilemma of absolutes remains untouched because, however sound Mr. More's impulse may be, he seems to lack the philosophical equipment to *think* himself round his dilemma.

His critics have accused him of defect in the "æsthetic sense"; he has seemed to be preoccupied with the content of literature; he has little to say of style, almost nothing, except what he says impatiently, of the craft of writing from the point of view of the writer. He never permits us to forget his conviction that the problems of craft are secondary and "æsthetic" and that, if the writer is virtuous, his writing will take care of itself. The reply to this is not that such confusion of thought is unworthy of Mr. More — which it is. It is not enough to oppose to it an equal confusion — that his is due to a lack of æsthetic perception. His failure to understand the fundamental significance of style explains his failure to understand most of the literature that he has read. It is his intention to extract from any given book the doctrine that coincides with his own. We have just seen that it is difficult to find out what Mr. More's doctrine is. With what is literature, then, to coincide? Mr. More entertains false hopes of literature; he expects it to be a philosophy and a religion because, in his state of "independent faith," he has neither a final religion nor a final philosophy prior to the book which he happens to be reading.

In his most recent volume, *The Demon of the Absolute,* he remarks, somewhat complacently, that he is not concerned with artistic means; only with "results." This distinction runs all through Mr. More's writings: he is not concerned with the letter of religion, the means through which it exists and is preserved — the religion itself. Religious results, separate from religious means, become — if they become anything — independent faith. Such a faith is incommunicable; it lacks the means of communication. When Mr. More tells us that a writer has a sound moral attitude, he may be right, but there is no reason to believe that he may not be wrong.

His judgments, for us, are thus neither right nor wrong: they are meaningless; there is not an ounce of authority for one of them. He cannot cite his independent faith; it is rationally inarticulate; there is no way to communicate it.

Nevertheless, Mr. More evidently supposes that he is conveying it; else he would not continue to write books. His reasons for this supposition not only command attention; they are of great interest in themselves. Mr. More is, among other things, a Platonist. What is a Platonist? Is he a man who believes what Plato believed? Or is he a man who uses the Socratic method for the exposure of contradiction? If he is the latter, to what end does he expose contradiction? Since Mr. More obviously believes things that Plato did not, he is, if he be a Platonist at all, one by virtue of his use of the Socratic method. But why does he use it? There is only one answer: for the support of independent faith. He is a Platonist only in the sense in which all men are said to be either Aristotelians or Platonists.

And yet he constantly draws upon Plato for quotations and analogies (he has written a book on the subject); he has the air of delivering his opinions from quoted authority. But owing to the distracting influence of the other authorities — Christ, the Forest Philosophers — which compose his independent faith, it is difficult to ascertain just how authoritative, at a given moment, Plato is.[5] The real authority at all times,

[5] This would be difficult if Mr. More quoted Plato alone. Plato's method not being formal and abstract (personal) but allegorical and symbolic (dramatic), critics have always unloaded upon his lack of system a private system of their own: Mr. More is not the first to do it. With More, it is difficult to decide who is speaking, More or Plato, but the question must usually be answered in favor of More. An interesting feature of Mr. More's devotion to Plato is the former's almost stubborn belief in "common sense" and the latter's rejection of it. Mr. More seems to ignore this inconsistency. Plato does not *demand* exact thinking of the reader, who *may* come away without knowing if he has done more than follow an argument or unravel an allegory.

of course, is Mr. More. I need hardly point out that Mr. More logically drives himself into the position of spiritual exile and, if he speak at all, of arrogance to which he has consigned the romantic enemy.

The belief in the authority of Plato when More is the actual authority explains the poor quality of his literary judgments. Moral judgments are never more irresponsible than when the judge deludes himself into thinking that the high and mighty of the past are behind him. Mr. More is a man whose moral habits are not subject to the purification and correction of a specific external authority, and the delusion that they are only increases their irresponsibility. In the name of restraint he is able to evoke the limit of his personal distastes.

Mr. More's fallacy is identical, as I have said, with that of the non-religious Humanists.[6] Because he cannot find an adequate conception of concrete tradition (experience) in terms of authority (reason), he gives us abstract, timeless, rootless, habitual ideas that closely resemble, in structure, the universe of the naturists; authority in More becomes the spectral sorites of infinite regress. There is no conception of religion as preserved, organized experience; you have a mechanism of moral ideas. Take this passage by Mr. More:

> True art is humanistic rather than naturalistic; and its gift of high and permanent pleasure is the response of our own breast to the artist's delicately revealed sense of that divine control moving like the spirit of God upon the face of the waters.
>
> So far I seem to see my way clear. If you should ask me by what rhetorical devices or by what instrument of representation one poem . . . appeals more successfully than another to the higher faculty within us, how, for instance, Milton's *Paradise Lost* accomplishes

[6] When this essay appeared in *The Criterion* (July, 1929) I had not read Mr. More's *Christ the Word*, the fifth volume of his well-known work called

this end better than Blackmore's *King Arthur,* though *both poems were written with equally good intentions* (italics mine), I would reply frankly that the solution of this problem of the imagination may be beyond my powers of critical analysis.

The first part of this passage is a fair example of the pulpit rhetoric into which Mr. More plunges when he speaks of the relation of literature to religion, and the reason why his thought is vague is that, like Professor Babbitt, he has not been philosophical enough; he has not examined his own assumptions. It is difficult to distinguish, in the above quotation, any reason why true art is Humanistic; for the "high and permanent pleasure" and "the divine control" are only pleasant ways of saying mechanical habits of thought. Mr. More has never philosophized his ideas into ultimates — those fixed yet interpretative flexible positions from the viewpoint of which the ghost of naturalism and the otherwise disembodied spirit of morality become, not things, but descriptions of tendencies in the life of men. As Mr. Eliot has pointed out in the case of Babbitt, More ignores the conditions out of

"The Greek Tradition." I am not competent to judge the scholarship of *Christ the Word* — the sole title in his voluminous writings that I had not read — but a careful reading, in the light of his recent essay in *The Criterion* (see note, p. 672), which I understand is part of the final volume on The Greek Tradition, makes clear two things, and confirms my argument: (1) Mr. More is dissatisfied with the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition of the Church, and (2) he is dissatisfied with it because it will not let him be in it and cling to his independent faith at the same time. Therefore: he argues that the true tradition is Plato, whose lack of system goes well with primitive Christianity, and that the Church sold out to the Demon of the Absolute — Abstraction, or Reason — when it let Aristotle in. So far, this is only a restatement of the view of many Protestant writers; the next step is that the Eastern Church is free of the taint of reason and thus better than the Western. This may or may not be true, and Mr. More may or may not be a communicant of the Eastern Church. If he is, his readers will wish him well; if he is not and does not intend to become one, his readers will continue to wish him well—knowing that he must either found a religion of his own or keep up his present academic exercises in religious history. It will be up to Mr. More to decide which course is the better way of affirming his independent faith.

which a book emerges; these conditions alone realize the author's ideas; they alone contribute morality, not an abstract, but a specific morality in terms of experience, to the work of literature. More cannot tell us why Milton is superior to Blackmore because his sole idea of the mind is that of a mechanism of moral ideas. The intentions of the two poems being equally good, he cannot understand why their equal morality does not moralize the pieces into an equal excellence; because moral ideas are *things* they ought to be as efficient one place as another. Mr. More conceives literature, first, as a mechanism of ideas; then, as a mechanism of books themselves; literature is a timeless, self-perpetuating machine set in motion in an infinite past which is no past at all. To be another Dante you have only to believe that his ideas, his "results," are good, and to identify them in some undefined sense with your own moral habits.

Mr. More's doctrine is morality for morality's sake, and if art for art's sake has always been an outrage upon reason, his position is no less so. There is little rationally to choose between them.

His view of style as rhetorical devices is, then, perfectly consistent: they have no necessary connection with what is being said; like morality, they simply exist. Morality being automatically moral, moral values are moral before they are communicated; the style merely dresses them up. But how can there be abstract results apart from the means — apart from the medium which, under *temporal* conditions, fixes the values in experience? Style — the way values are apprehended — is the technique for validating them. Mr. More's theory logically ends in never uttering another word.

Because he cannot take the philosophical view he sees naturalism as the worship of instinct, license, self — all the

things, in fact, that a respectable citizen of the United States, for reasons of social habit, would not permit himself to do. No one in his senses would deny that François Villon was a person of instinct, that he was pitiably engrossed in his own self, that he was a licentious fellow; no one in his senses would call François Villon a naturalist. The point at issue lies where Humanism cannot take hold of it. For Naturalism is not a thing, nor several things; it is an intellectual focus, getting intenser since the seventeenth century, prior to certain habits of thinking and of conduct. The anti-naturalist is still a naturalist if he cannot get off his naturalistic plane; More is one because he presents a mechanical view of experience. A doctrine is not a method, and until it can be made one, the Humanists are "flattering themselves they are philosophizing, and that they will so be good men."

III

What is a technique for the realization and preservation of values? How shall we know when we have values? —a more difficult problem than the mere conviction that we need them. There is no such thing as pure value, nor are their values separate from the means of creating and preserving them. There are certain definite ways in which men have had access to value in the past (the Humanists tell us that Dante had values, but not how he got them); but our problem is, Have we any of those ways now? If we have, how may they be used? Is there a condition or are there several conditions that must be met before we may use them?

We have seen the assumptions of the Humanists. The assumptions of this essay are that Humanism is not enough, and that if the values for which the Humanist pleads are to be

made rational, even intelligible, the prior condition of an objective religion is necessary. There is only one necessary religion, as Mr. Eliot has said, for men in the West; this was clear to the anti-authoritarian mind of William James as well. It must be understood that this essay urges the claim of no particular Western church, and it is in no sense a confession of faith; but the connection between the Reformation and Naturalism, and what I conceive authority to be, define the position that the Humanists must occupy if they wish to escape intellectual suicide. Religion is the sole technique for the validating of values.

Why is it? The virtue of religion is its successful representation of the problem of evil. We have seen how Mr. Foerster, wishing at once to cultivate natural human nature and to reject it, could not decide how far he cared to go in either direction; this was because his dualism was verbal; there were no really opposed principles; there was simply an infinite number of points on the same scale. And thus his opposition between Quality and Quantity was verbal also; it was Quantity versus Quantity, presided over by rootless Restraint, the referee who checked nothing but coherent thought.

There is a preliminary question to be asked, which it does not seem to occur to the Humanists to ask. They tell us that somehow we have to do with Quality, but since, for them, nature is the quantified nature of scientism and the mind is a quantified machine of moral ideas, it is difficult to see where Quality comes from.[7] The preliminary question, then, is: What is the source of qualitative experience? Both horns of his dualism being reduced to Quantity, the Humanist cannot tell us; and that is why much of his criticism gives you the

[7] The Humanists use the term "quality" at the same philosophical level as a fashionable tailor would use it.

feeling that he expects you to pluck values out of the air. Since the Humanist has not been philosophically hardy enough to work out of the naturalistic version of nature (which he naively accepts), since, in fact, he cannot root the concept of nature as Quantity out of his mind, his idea of Quality is irresponsible, foot-loose, highly transcendental in a kind of Concord sense.

The source of Quality is nature itself because it is the source of experience. It is only by holding to an idea that leaves nature an open realm of Quality that experience is possible at all; and, conversely, experience alone is the road to Quality. If an American zoölogist seeks a certain Philippine cobra he doubtless says, "*Naja samaransis*"; the snake is merely an instance of the quantification of nature. The head-hunter, however, has a vivider feeling for the unique possibilities of the particular cobra; it may bite him; it may give him the evil eye — both richly qualitative experiences. For the Humanist, *opposing* Quality to nature, has got it on the wrong side of his duality. Pure Quality would be pure evil, and it is only through the means of our recovery from a lasting immersion in it, it is only by maintaining the precarious balance upon the point of collapse into Quality, that any man survives his present hour; pure quality is pure disintegration. The scientist says, "*Naja samaransis*"; Mr. More, a cadence of the same theme — "Immoral"; Quality is quantified before we ever see it as Quality; and nature becomes a closed system of abstraction in which man is deprived of all experience whatever and, by being so deprived, reduced to an abstraction himself.

The religious attitude is the very sense, the religious dogma the definition, of the precarious balance of man upon the brink of pure Quality. But if you never have Quality, never

have the challenge of evil, you have no religion — which is to say, you have no experience either. It is experience, immediate and traditional fused — Quality and Quantity — which is the means of validating values; experience gives the focus to style. Rhetorical device is our abstract term for properties of style after style is achieved; they have never of themselves made one poem better than another.

Religion's respect for the power of nature lies in her contempt for knowledge of it; to quantify nature is ultimately to quantify ourselves. Religion is satisfied with the dogma that nature is evil, and that our recovery from it is mysterious ("grace"). For the abstraction of nature ends, as we have seen, with the destruction of the reality of time, and immediate experience being impossible, so do all ideas of tradition and inherited order become timeless and incoherent. It is the indispensable office of religion that it checks the abstracting tendency of the intellect in the presence of nature; nature abstract becomes man abstract, and he is at last condemned to a permanent immersion in pure and evil Quality; he is forever condemned to it because he can no longer see it for what it is. The protection of religion is the abstraction, not of nature, which so conceived would be the abstraction of abstraction, but of experience. It proposes a system of Quantity *against* nature; it is a quantitative version of the encounter between the head-hunter and the cobra; but it says nothing about the cobra-in-itself. The organized meaning of the encounters of man and nature, which are temporal and concrete, is religious tradition, and its defence is dogma. The dogma acts for the recoil of the native from the snake: it is his technique for finding out the value of the encounter. Every such encounter is rich and unique in Quality: it is the temporal, never recurring focus, the new triumph, the re-affirmation of

the preserved experience of man. The modern Humanist, because of habitual reactions, recoils, but he has no reason for doing so, and his recoil is without value. He and the snake are one: Quantity versus Quantity; nature against nature; snake against snake; or, for that matter, man against man.

It is the failure of the Humanist to get out of this dilemma which makes his literary criticism feeble and incomplete. Mr. Foerster says: "It is best to face the issue in all candour" — the issue being Shakespeare. This poet merely "presents" life; he does not "interpret" it. If I had never read Shakespeare and had not read the rest of Mr. Foerster's book, his distinction would sound plausible; but having read his book, I know what he means which is something very different from what he thinks he means. He means that the mind of Shakespeare was not a mechanism of moral ideas. The Humanists quarrel with literature because it cannot give them a philosophy and a church; but they keep turning to literature because they cannot find these things elsewhere. You cannot have the sense of literature without the prior and specific sense of something else. Without this you expect too much of literature; you expect of it a religion and a philosophy; and by expecting of it the wrong thing, you violate it, and in the end you get from it less than it is meant to yield; you get neither literature nor religion, nor anything that is intelligible. You destroy literature without constructing a religion.

The infinite Quality in nature mysteriously assailing the available experience of man is the theme of tragedy; the struggle for preservation against disintegrating Quality is the meaning of religion. The dependent ideas, religion and tragedy, are eqally incomprehensible to the Humanists and to their enemies, Zola, Rimbaud, and Mr. Sinclair Lewis. Shakespeare, says Mr. Foerster, must go — "despite the im-

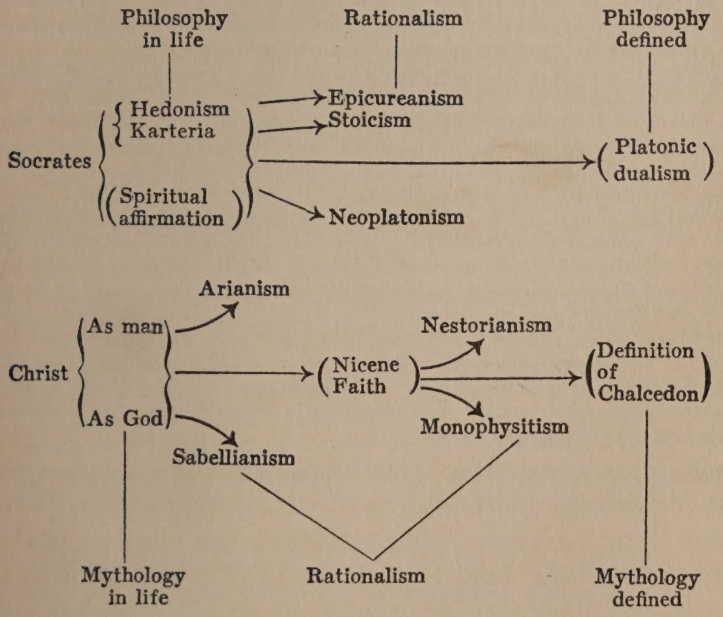
pressive development of his mind and art." What is development of mind and art? I do not know. Neither does Mr. Foerster.

ALLEN TATE

We think it only fair to Mr. Tate and to Mr. More to quote the following pages from *Christ the Word* which are most pertinent to Mr. Tate's discussion.

THE EDITORS

"It should seem therefore that our only choice lies between a reasonable philosophy based on an irrational paradox and an unreasonable metaphysic based on a rational presumption. And I cannot see how the like alternative can be avoided in the attitude we take towards the contending claims of an orthodox philosophy and an heritical metaphysic in the dogmas of religion. The parallel may be presented to the eye schematically as follows, with the proviso, however, that it aims only at a rough approximation to the facts:"



"But individually, and on its negative side, each of these major heresies was a blow levelled at the very spirit of faith and worship which it sought to elucidate, in the one case by slurring over the functions of the Saviour as representative of the human race, in the other case by clouding his mission as revealer of God. More than that — and the point I would now make would be clearer if the innumerable subsidiary heresies had been brought into our survey — in the period under consideration every possible means of reconciling the Incarnation, that 'thing truly paradoxical' as Athanasius admitted, with the monistic demands of reason had been tried, and all had ended in logical confusion and moral disaster. The time had come to call a halt. The constructive work of the Greek intelligence had been accomplished, once for all; the centrifugal force of the Greek character threatened to dissipate religion into endless factions. There was needed just such a statement of orthodoxy as that provided by Chalcedon — a formula which, in hard, precise, immitigable terms, should set a check upon the claims of reason to extend the faith in one direction to the exclusion of the other. It had come to this pass: either the central fact of Christianity had to be abandoned, or such claims of reason had to be transcended. You may rationally reverence Christ as an inspired man (at least you may if you do not inquire too curiously into the meaning of inspiration), or you may rationally (if it so pleases your fancy) dissolve an event of history into a fiction of the mythopoeic imagination, and to one or the other of these extremes or the heresies were inevitably sloping; you cannot rationally worship the incarnate Saviour, as both the orthodox and all but the most intransigent heretics understand worship.

"Such an admission may be painful, even humiliating. But, after all, the dogma of the Incarnation is no whit more irrational than the dualism which meets us at every turn of our inquiry into the nature of things, — *e.g.* than the incomprehensible junction of body and mind with which every act of our life makes us familiar, and against which the endeavours of a rationalizing psychology break down invariably in wanton disregard of facts or in gross abuse of logic.[8] The analogy, I may add, was clearly perceived by the theologians of the faith fifteen hundred years ago, and was even embodied in the creed improperly attributed to Athanasius: '*As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.*' However our pride of intellect may rebel, there can be no intelligent attitude towards the greater problems of existence until we have learned that reason, though it may be the pragmatic guide of conduct, is not the source of knowledge or even the final test of truth. The question put to the soul of each man is not whether the primary tenet of Christianity has the kind of consistency demanded by logic, but whether it corresponds with the lessons and surest intuitions of spiritual experience."

[8] This argument I have developed in the first chapter of *The Christ of the New Testament.*

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BRUSHWOOD BOY AT THE FRONT

A FAREWELL TO ARMS. *By Ernest Hemingway. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.50.

Hemingway's strongest and most moving writing is still in *Men Without Women.* In those short stories of gunmen, prizefighters, drug addicts, and bullfighters, he was entirely without self-consciousness, unevasively absorbed by the creation of figures in which he found something to admire and much to pity. He projected them confidently out of himself, and these creatures of his imagination stood like models while he drew them firmly, surely, carefully, divining and surprising their most secret changes of countenance and most characteristic movements. The present novel, although in matters relating to "mere" writing and the organization of materials it marks an advance upon the author's earlier work, is fundamentally retrograde: it represents a return to his uneasy concern with himself.[1] While the novel was being published serially in *Scribner's*, there was repeated protest in the chit-chat department at the back of that magazine to the effect that this was emphatically not an autobiographical novel. This protest (accompanied — so vulgar is the practice of our publishers — by references to Hemingway's Italian war cross and photographs of the author in skiing costume), this protest despite, the novel gives off an odour of autobiography.

Every fictional composition is of course a compound of experience. But the motive of experience and the motive of art are not the same: we endure experience for ourselves, whereas we re-create it for others,

[1] I do not need to insist that I mean this in no common way. With a sobriety of comportment which all of his contemporaries might envy, and most of them be counselled to emulate, Hemingway has scrupulously disdained the bays with which he would so hysterically be crowned at New York literary "teas."

for an imagined and ideally comprehending reader. An experience, and the emotion which accompanies it, are unimportant except to him who is experiencing, for the reason that they are not being shared; and to be made art, there must be injected into the experience a different, indeed a superior sort of emotion, the emotion of the artist over and above that of the protagonist. It is the artist's emotion (not the protagonist's) that we are able to share, and it is likely that the measure of sincerity and seriousness in art, may very well be merely the depth and the genuineness of the artist's emotion. In certain episodes of *A Farewell to Arms* the impression is irresistible that the author has endeavoured not to reveal or traduce emotions he has experienced, while yet retaining the episodic *cadre* of experience, and in so doing he has been forced to substitute sensation for emotion. In a superficial formula, instead of detaching Frederic and Catherine from himself — the artist's creative gesture — he has detached himself from them, in the gesture of the observer. Born of a desire to evade the autobiographical, there was in him a curious *will to not-create*. The contrary will produced *Men Without Women*; it gave us all the figures save that of Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*: the will manifest in *A Farewell to Arms* is one which Hemingway cannot be urged too strongly to defeat.

If we examine this will in the light of the data afforded by *A Farewell to Arms* we find at bottom, I believe, a phenomenon which is at once an ideal and a fear: the ideal is that of our boyhood friend the Redskin; the fear is the fear of displaying emotion. We have had the ideal before, in, for example, novels of the Wild West (I doubt that Homer's heroes refrained from crying out when they were in pain); but I do not know an age before our own in which it could be understood that such an ideal might be accompanied by such a fear. In Hemingway's novel, the Brave is not afraid of war, and the Squaw does not flinch at the thought of birth pangs. The story of their young love in the spring of the year is swiftly told, for most of us reminiscentially stirring, and for the young a simulacrum of Tristan and Iseut. Frederic is a somewhat morose young man, and Catherine is a rather desperately happy young woman. He, the male, is served and adored and complacently spreads his peacock tail before her who serves and adores. Beyond this there is no discernible difference between them: they are wraiths, *deux formes* qui *ont tout à*

l'heure passé. Our knowledge of them is limited to their sensations. There is no need that we be shown conflict *between* them (though one has the impression that a woman would find it hard to live nine or ten months with the Frederic of this novel and not have been pretty well tortured by him); but of conflict *within* them, of their personality, their common humanity, we know nothing. Even in what is presented as their bravery they are the same person, avid of sensation, submissive to the flesh and the world (which is war), grimly gay in their unprotesting acceptance of circumstance, seeking and finding a haven in bed, with a bottle of *fine* or Chianti to stand guard over their exaltation. This return to the primitive, accomplished by Hemingway as skilfully and naturally as Voltaire transported Candide about an impossible world, has as movement, as episode, the merit which Barrès used to call credibility, but the protagonists remain insignificant, a pair of silhouettes. Now and then their dialogue possesses a warm charm, is swept by an all too brief wind of sympathetically heedless youth — and charm and breeze vanish before the reader is able to fix these people in his imagination and love them as young lovers should be loved.

The war story, which fills nearly two-thirds of the book, is by very much more successful. Only one engagement is described, for Frederic was an ambulance officer, not an infantryman, and his experience of war was had just behind the lines. Yet that too was war, and the sound and smell of it in the streets in which this American volunteer and his men were billeted, over the hills and on the highways that led to the line of battle, are admirably rendered. Fine as they are, and of thrilling actuality as is the magnificent account of the retreat of the Italian horde from Caporetto, one retains a stronger sense of the characters who people the scene than of the war itself. It is these secondary characters of the novel who are the most vivid. The author knew about Catherine only that she was inexplicably in love with Frederic; she was Frederic's creature, not his, and what Frederic knew about her nobody will ever know. But the men at the front are Hemingway's creatures: he imagined them, knew them, gave them personality and life. It is not simply that Rinaldi is intended to be liked, the priest to be stupid and yet too helpless to draw one's rudeness, Passini and Manera to be socialists, Aymo and Piani and Bondello to be sterling comrades-in-arms. The intention in these

and other minor figures is fulfilled; they are what they are purported to be; and moreover it is only when they are on the scene that the novel is lifted above the level of selective autobiography, that Hemingway's creative gift expands and enjoys free play, that his profound feeling for men of simple desires and his sardonic and occasionally subtle humour emerge, and that his work is of a quality commensurate with the unreserved enthusiasm of which he is for the time being the object.

As for the writing, it seems to me the best Hemingway has done. The book is welded together with great care and scrupulous attention to detail. There are surprises in the novel, but only because we do not read attentively enough: the tone of each situation is sounded in advance; the colour of each character is indicated somewhere before he moves completely into view. In the descriptive passages, Hemingway shows for the first time that he can write by ear as well as by eye, so to say. Even the haphazard punctuation is not an obstacle to enjoyment of the fluidity and the rhythmical beauty of many of his periods. He has remembered, besides, all the lessons of his arduous, self-taught apprenticeship. Echoes are here of those steely paragraphs which comprized the first Paris publication of *In Our Time*, and of much that he has learned since. Now and then there is a line of gibberish, of unfortunate Joyce or bad Stein; his eye for objects and excessive concern with detail lead him into dull cataloguing; his meticulousness about *should* and *would* (which does not prevent his using *whom* in the nominative) lures him into affectation; he sprays the words "nice" and "fine" and "lovely" a bit too monotonously through his pages.

There are two Hemingways: the positive, creative talent skilfully at work in a being who sees and understands the anguish and bravery of men struggling with forces whose purpose they cannot divine; and the negative, fearful writer with the psychological impediments of a child afraid of the dark and conjuring it away with a whistle as hopeless as it is off key. From the first of these we may look for work of great merit.

LEWIS GALANTIÈRE

SUBTLETY AND CONVICTION

THE LAMP AND THE LUTE. *Studies in Six Modern Authors. By Bonamy Dobrée. Oxford. The Clarendon Press.* 1929. $2.00.

VISIONS AND CHIMERAS. *By Prosser Hall Frye. Boston. Marshall Jones Company.* 1929. $2.50.

These two books, both collections of literary essays, may serve as an illustration of the difference between two generations. There is no gain in pitting the two authors against each other: their purposes are different, and even when they are writing about the same man they barely meet. Yet one has to notice that they are representative of two ways of thinking about life and letters, and one is forced to make a judgment about the value of these two ways of thinking. The most obvious conclusion is that the younger generation has lost something of worth, an assurance of security, which gave a clarity to the judging and thinking of the older generation. That clarity seems to come from a knowledge of what are the right questions to put to the author who is being criticized. Whether that clarity and assurance were gained at the expense of a subtlety which the younger generation can employ remains debatable. Such a proposition would not seem to be confirmed in the present instances.

Of these two books, the one written by Professor Frye, who may be taken as a representative of the older school, is the less pretentious. It is a collection of papers in the selection of which the author has been guided, "rather by the merit of the subject than by that of the essay itself." The essays were largely occasional, one gathers, and it is not to be held against the author that this book seems slighter in importance than his previous work, *Romance and Tragedy*. One is disappointed at finding no essay as illuminating and provocative as some in his earlier work, notably *The Idea of Greek Tragedy*. Surveying these *Lesefrüchte*, however, is a pleasant task. There are essays upon Sheridan, Sterne, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Calderon, Montaigne, Pascal, Sir Thomas Browne, Renan, Thomas Huxley, Pater, De

Quincey, and Ibsen. Professor Frye's writing is always fresh, even when, as is usually the case, he is presenting accepted opinions. One rather wishes that in writing on Sheridan and Sterne he had borne more carefully in mind the excellent opinion he had announced in an earlier book: "But all the same the impertinence [i.e., biographical criticism] . . . is still impertinence. In any case what gives the writer his sole interest for criticism is his book." In writing of Sterne, in particular, his wit loses its pleasantly waspish quality and becomes almost quarrelsome in the manner of Carlyle on Lamb — a passage which he quotes and condemns. But such mistakes of tone and direction are, of course, rare, and in his essay on Carlyle he confutes himself and us by producing sound estimates of Carlyle the writer from a study of Carlyle the man.

In two essays the author transcends the limits of mere subject and writes of matters that are fundamental to human wisdom. The two essays are those on Montaigne and Pascal. He has shown the former as the skeptical philosopher *par excellence* who pushes his Pyrrhonism so far that the position of all later Christian apologists is seriously undermined. The essay on Pascal, the most significant in the book, treats of him as apologist and pessimist. As an apologist he strove for more than he could obtain: "To integrate religion with the physical order is beyond his powers; he can only postulate it after the fashion of his time." As a pessimist he is still extremely valuable; the astringency of his message is more necessary to our time perhaps than ever before, and "ancient speculation is still valid in as far as it consists of an ethical interpretation of life, a free play of the intelligence about our spiritual experience." It is here apposite to juxtapose Professor Frye's essay to the one on Pascal written by Aldous Huxley recently in the first issues of *The Realist*. Mr. Huxley, like all liberals, is offended by Pascal's vision of human life, and spends his time bickering with the shade of Pascal over Pascal's physical infirmities and ignorance of those delights of physical energy which Mr. Huxley holds dear. Professor Frye, standing on firmer ethical ground, puts the right questions to Pascal, disregards or even rejects his answer to the problem of the Christian religion because that answer is a work of supererogation (a typically humanist attitude) and accepts with approval Pascal's answer to the problem of the moral status of humanity. In other words, Professor Frye, by reason of possessing a definite and tradi-

tional set of beliefs about ethics, is better equipped to criticize Pascal and to elicit the essence of his teaching than is a writer whose beliefs are fluid, who possesses prejudices rather than beliefs, and who chases those prejudices around the periphery of the matter. The same proposition will be found valid when one comes to compare Professor Frye's essay upon Ibsen with that of Mr. Dobrée.

The Lamp and the Lute is in many ways a more interesting book than *Visions and Chimeras*. The subjects of Mr. Dobrée's essays, Ibsen, Hardy, Kipling, E. M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot, are almost all of our time; the author keeps his eye pretty well fixed upon the problems of the contemporary imagination; there is a more legitimate opportunity for novelty in his point of view; and Mr. Dobrée seems to possess, or his choice of subjects invites, a greater subtlety than Professor Frye makes use of, a subtlety which frequently adds persuasion to the interpretation. Yet one is left, after reading, with the sense of dissatisfaction, a certainty that nothing like the last word has been said, and a frequent irritation at the inconsecutive character of Mr. Dobrée's thinking. This last quality may be due to the fact that these essays were originally lectures and have been abridged.

It is necessary to note that Mr. Dobrée has deliberately eschewed the ethical approach. He announces himself as incompetent and not desirous of attempting it. One is pleased at these fair words, the whole world is not yet of the humanist doxy, and the resources of "pure" literary criticism have not yet been exhausted. Unfortunately Mr. Dobrée's book demonstrates once again the difficulty of judging literature *in vacuo*; his subjects force him into the thorny field of ethics, and it is there that he is most ineffective as a critic.

To take the least interesting essays first: Mr. Dobrée proves once again that it is very difficult to say anything new or valuable about T. S. Eliot. The essay about E. M. Forster, who is used as a foil to Kipling, is slight; his interest in the "personal relation" and the "inner life" of his characters is emphasized; the essay will be of value to those readers who know Mr. Forster only as the author of *Passage to India*. Mr. Dobrée makes a valiant effort to rehabilitate Kipling as worthy of serious consideration. He stresses Kipling's creed of action, which should make that author popular with M. Massis's "jeunes gens d'aujourd'hui," and his "love of loyalty." One asks,

"Loyalty to what?" and seemingly must be content with just loyalty. The British Empire is instanced, and here, like all Kipling apologists, Mr. Dobrée is unhappy. He puts on a brave front: "The Empire then is to be cherished . . . because, like old Rome, it is the most superb instrument to cause men to outface the universe, assert himself (*sic*) against vacancy." This is pretty hollow, and, I think, Mr. Dobrée realizes it. The revaluation of Kipling fails, in spite of the impressive philosophical (and moral) background of "an indifferent universe" and stoicism that is erected for him.

It is when Mr. Dobrée approaches D. H. Lawrence that his non-ethical criticism breaks down completely. He is helpless, as would be anyone judging with the same lack of foundation, before Lawrence's gusto, vitality, "poetry." Mr. Dobrée has to accept, and accepts rejoicingly, the effusions about "essential maleness," "splendid split between the sexes," "old, salty way of love," "recoil from things gone dead." There is not a word of protest; one is supposed to consider all this "phallic mysticism" as possessing "sheer poetic quality." One would think that the trenchant opinions of Mr. Wyndham Lewis had never been made public. It was Mr. Dobrée's business to meet Mr. Lewis's objections to Lawrence's work and to meet them on the ethical grounds on which they were made.

If it is the failure to apply ethical criteria to Lawrence's work which invalidates the criticism of that author it is the application of confused and irrelevant moral judgments to Hardy which makes Mr. Dobrée's essay incoherent. Mr. Dobrée has been worried throughout his book by the Greeks. He insists that Hardy is to be tried by his relationship with the great tragic writers. At some time, one feels, the defenders of Hardy will regret the evil day when the names of Aeschylus and Sophocles were first invoked as sharers of his high place. Such a comparison if fairly made can only be fatal to such a high ranking of Hardy as Mr. Dobrée makes. One dislikes all this talk about "ranking," but if Sophocles is accounted a great tragic writer then, surely, some other term must be used for Hardy.

Mr. Dobrée has been led into this misuse of hyperbole, by a set of wrong opinions about ethics and the nature of tragedy. Like Hardy, for instance, he overrates the importance of the partial collapse of revealed religion. Surely the position of the modern non-Christian is not on that account different from that of Sophocles. Mr. Dobrée

cites as "the attitude common to all tragic writers" Gloster's remark in *Lear*

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport.

This is surely not the attitude of the author of *Oedipus Coloneus*. Mr. Dobrée goes on "the great writer of tragedy manages to convey that though this be the truth it is well that men should behave thus and thus; . . . one way of life is better than another. . . . Not that fault is to be imputed to the wrongdoer; he also is a pebble of fate." There is a discrepancy here of the sort that Professor Frye had in mind when he wrote "Once admit sophistication into our conceptions of personal responsibility . . . and our moral downfall is assured." The great tragic writer, Mr. Dobrée says, can "see beauty in all things, even in the inexorable working out of the odds against man." Perhaps, when man is represented by an Antigone or an Oedipus; Hardy did not see it when he gave us his heroes and heroines, who are the Ios and Haemons of today, not tragic, but pathetic. Mr. Dobrée says of Hardy's Tess: "It was because of her sensitiveness, her integrity, her purity, that she was brought to ruin, not because she once, half-unwittingly, committed a fault." This is probably quite a true analysis of Hardy's tragic intuition, and after it only moral blindness can ask us to consider that intuition comparable to that of Sophocles or Shakespeare.

There are many merits in Mr. Dobrée's book to which this review does not do justice, notably the subtlety and wisdom of his remarks about Ibsen's "realism" and his symbolism. This essay on Ibsen, perhaps the best in the book, has more to say and is more interesting than Professor Frye's. The latter, however, goes straight to the mark and shows Ibsen as the student of "progressive degeneration." Mr. Dobrée recognizes that "the emotions that impel his people are [sometimes] those of emptiness and moral weakness," but he does not seem to realize how important this is, and consequently his essay lacks gravity and definiteness. Here, one realizes, is an instance of the advantage the older generation has over the younger; an advantage which will not be displaced until the younger critics have a set of beliefs — not necessarily the same set — but one as well-grounded and definite as that of the older school.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

AN APOLOGY FOR SCULPTURE

SCULPTURE. *A. M. Rindge, M.A., Ph.D. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $6.00.

With the term academic become one of opprobrium, critical standards have tended to disintegrate, and though there has been in recent years a reintegration of literary values, a similar movement has not yet appeared in art. The inclusiveness of the title of Dr. Rindge's book aroused the expectation of a sound aesthetic approach to an art in which the defects of contemporary culture are especially apparent; but the author's acquiescent attitude and complete catholicity of taste, impelling her to seek a common basis for the enjoyment of the most heterogeneous examples of sculpture of the past and present, militates against fundamental standards of any kind. This is unfortunately typical of the Twentieth century, for hitherto appreciation has always been healthily circumscribed. The Rococo critic enjoyed the Renaissance but disliked Gothic, the Victorian critic worshipped Gothic and despised the Rococo. Both would have been horrified by African art. But Dr. Rindge in trying to find a basis for the appreciation of utterly diverse types of sculpture, passes over the contradictory standards that must have been employed in their creation, to find a common denominator in a dubious psychological evaluation. It is interesting to remark that Dr. Rindge's profuse notes on aesthetics are derived entirely from modern works. It might have concerned her more to know what the various periods she has discussed themselves thought about what they were doing. If so, she would have been profoundly impressed by the originality of modern criticism.

Probably the declining use of sculpture impelled Dr. Rindge to write her a book. This trend in contemporary taste is partly due to the requirements of an architectural style which originated out of practical rather than artistic exigencies. "In the past," as Dr. Rindge points out, "in order to save a building from giving the two dimensional impression too strongly it has been the practice of the ages to emphasize three dimensions in its detail and ornaments, the columns of the colonnade, the splayed jamb, and the three dimensional relief

of sculptured ornament." But at present all this is accomplished as a result of the necessities of the zoning law, which force the architect to break up his building into groups of three dimensional units in the various set backs. But there is also, of course, the question of scale. When one is far enough away from a skyscraper to appreciate it as a whole, the incidental ornament is only perceived as a blurring and softening of the outlines. However, as most of our views of skyscrapers are of only one or two stories, such considerations would be ignored if people had continued to be interested in the didactic function of art; but it is only necessary to quote Ruskin's statement in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* that, "the only admiration worth having attaches itself wholly to the meaning of the sculpture and the color of the building . . . Proportion of masses is mere doggerel," to appreciate the complete reversal of fashion.

It is, also, partly due to an historical coincidence. When in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries painting began to be first disassociated from architecture and to exist as a separate undertaking, those two countries which especially furthered this development, Venice and Holland, were peculiarly weak in sculpture, so that the glyptic art never developed the equivalent of the easel picture until the Eighteenth century and the advent of French terra cottas. Today as a reaction from the tendency of Biedermeyer, Louis Philippe and Victorian rooms to be cluttered up with objets de vertue such extraneous decoration tends to be extremely sparse.

To solve this problem, to find a raison d'etre for modern sculpture, Dr. Rindge, even more than critics of painting, finds herself forced to advocate "art for art's sake" and a technique of appreciation based on such an approach. Her frankness goes beyond that of most modern critics, but this may account for the paucity of the historical aesthetics in her book. It is so apparent that no creative period in the past has held a similar theory of aesthetics that Dr. Worringer felt that he need only say, "the air of the museum floats around all our artistic creations" to damn them utterly. Dr. Rindge was obviously worried by the article[1] in which this statement occurred as she quotes it at length, but she circumvents such a conclusion by a very original theory, though of questionable validity. "How do we know that the museum is not a legitimate factor in our social scheme. Many feel

[1] *Criterion*, August, 1927.

that it is more than a Morgue or a Valhalla. It may have a part so significant in our group life — since we neither live by princely patronage and grandeurs or on a large scale ourselves — that it has been able to raise up to itself a special product, an art as peculiarly its own as Versaille or Amiens . . . When the force of Museum taste and selection arrives at a point of exercising enlightened pressure upon the artist producer, the public will be even better off, perhaps, than under those other ages commonly called golden."[2]

Granting, however, a theory more ingenious than convincing, there still remains the question of the function of sculpture in relation to the spectator. In regard to this, Dr. Rindge, quoting from DeWitt Parker, Roger Fry, Rhys Carpenter and others to support her theory, assumes a psychological evaluation. Primarily the enjoyment of sculpture is the heightened vitality resulting from an increased realization of volume, in other words Mr. Bernard Berenson's theory of "tactile value." Dr. Rindge adds to the usual theory of visual and tactile appreciation, a theory of enjoyment through breathing, which I believe was first applied by Mr. Geoffrey Scott to architecture.[3] The idea is that, "In breathing we accentuate our Conception of ourselves as volume; in expanding our lungs we feel that we are increasing our occupation of space extending in three dimensions." It is this effect that the artist seeks to stimulate. But the nebulousness of the whole approach is revealed when Dr. Rindge goes on to suggest that, "Somehow this gives our spacial conception of volume the idea of a container, and the idea of a container is inwardness. Inwardness has meaning for us from the idea that our brain is within directing our outward activities. May it not be that because of our idea of our

[2] Mr. Eric Gill in a recent book *The Future of Sculpture* also comes to the conclusion that the future of sculpture is the museum. This is particularly interesting coming from one who has for so long attempted religious work.

[3] Speaking of symmetrical spaces, he says, "Spaces of such a character, therefore, obtain an additional entry to our sense of beauty through this elementary sensation of expansion. Unconscious though the process of breathing habitually is, its vital value is so emphatic that any restriction of the normal function is accompanied by pain, and — beyond a certain point by a peculiar horror; and the slightest assistance to it, as, for example, is natural in high air — by delight. The need to expand, felt in all our bodily movements, and most crucially in breathing is not only profound in every individual, but obviously of infinite antiquity in the race." — *The Architecture of Humanism.*

outwardness and inwardness we know volume in another way than by the sense of touch, which would merely be a perception of continuity of surface?" By contrast with this involved and obscure pseudo-science the lyrical sensuality of the Pateresque school of criticism typified by the Sitwells and Adrian Stokes has much to recommend it, if only from the point of view of literary style.

However, I am skeptical of the psychological approach to art appreciation not only because of its ambiguity but because of its newness. I believe that criticism and creation which are contemporaneous are so interrelated that the aims of the art are explicit in the criticism of the period. Had the artist been interested in attempting to communicate a heightened vitality through a sense of volume contemporary criticism in ages self-conscious enough to be critical would have mentioned the fact. Failing to discover a similar point of view in criticism, I am led to believe that we are reading into various forms of art aims often entirely foreign to the artist. In the second place, I question the validity of the theory of tactile values from the point of view of the spectator. There is no reason why tactile values should not have been as appreciable a century ago as they are today, and yet to so sensitive an observer as the Président de Brosses, Mr. Berenson's favorite example of plasticity, the paintings of Giotto, only appeared "fortes mauvaises," and Goethe writing a little later from Assisi ignores them entirely.

Indeed the Eighteenth century though it knew little of psychology still had a very clear idea of what art should be, of how the Grand Manner might be obtained, and it did not feel called upon to invent a technique of appreciation for what did not conform to its definite standards. Consequently in both criticism and creation it showed a homogeneity especially enviable today. It does not seem quite fair, therefore, when Dr. Rindge blames the public for modern artistic ineptitude, saying, "We are suffering from an exaggerated form of self expression in art today only because the public has turned his back on the artist, museumed him, saying 'If we must have art, and it seems proper according to history, why, suit yourself.'" If this attitude contrasts unfavorably with that of artistic dictators like Boucher and LeBrun, not the public, but critics like Dr. Rindge are responsible. She herself has said, "Perhaps at the present day we are at liberty to discard the old ideals of usefulness or non-usefulness as criteria for

beauty, perhaps also the social-good idea, or the ethical point of view, perhaps even the concept of universality." But with the traditional standards abandoned no definite criteria were supplied in their place.

The inadequacy of the more theoretical part of Dr. Rindge's book is particularly disappointing since she proves herself so sound in the purely technical question of sculpture, such as Material, Treatment, Nature of Surfaces, etc. If the conclusions in respect to these are not especially original, their repetition may be justified since there has not been so complete a codification in English of the satisfactory solutions of sculptural problems. Dr. Rindge has chosen Romanesque sculpture to exemplify many of the points she has made because hitherto it has been adequately discussed only in archeological treatises, which are necessarily limited in circulation. However, since in mentioning various sculptors only to illustrate specific points her book presupposes a certain general knowledge of sculpture, it is hardly for those who would not have read the admirable works of Professor Kingsley Porter and Professor Chandler Post. Therefore, the most valuable point of Dr. Rindge's book is when she relies least on her sources, and discusses subjects with which they do not especially concern themselves.

However, the deficiency of Dr. Rindge's method will remain as long as she feels that, "The world is too full of a number of things to make it wise to place restrictions on the artist's choice" — even though she may add, "but having chosen he must submit to judgment on his grasp and his performance, on his reading of the subject." In respect to the second part of her premise Dr. Rindge is successful, but the ambiguity resulting from the first part vitiates this to a large extent. Her complete Catholicity of taste has defects. In order to be all embracing it becomes vague. In place of definite standards, it is based on a pseudo-scientific theory. Absolute evaluation is impossible because a fundamental norm is lacking, and, as a working theory of aesthetics, it is responsible for the eclecticism of modern art. When Dr. Rindge makes up her mind whether art should be useful or non-useful, whether it should contribute to the social good, whether it should contain the concept of universality, she may find her appreciation more circumscribed, but at least it will be more genuine.

JOHN WALKER III

TILTED MOONS

TILTED MOONS. *By S. Foster Damon. New York. Harper Bros.* 1929. $2.00.

Damon does only a small number of the things that can be done with language, but some of these no one else does. They are such quiet things that his verse sounds like a score of music read, not heard. His imagery shows a world which has been drawn, not modeled. These strict limitations make his Prosody a fit medium for his purpose.

His purpose in his criticism is the reverse of his purpose in poetry. He thinks that literature is a medium for ideas. In this he is not alone. There are very intellectual people indeed who think that all ideas are best expressed in poetry and there are intelligent people who know that some ideas exist only as presented in poetry. Damon uses big ideas as strictly and lightly as he uses sight and sound. When he is concerned with crevaces of the will and plots of the mind, when the solemnity and sweep of his subject matter sober his facility and restrain his taste, his technical proficiency rises high and he states ideas with the purity of oracular utterance.

His Prosody is clear, not "expressive"; the ideas are clear ideas, not notions. Yet the work is puzzling; puzzling not only because it deals with puzzles, but puzzling in its own ultimate meaning. Damon instinctively and with conviction is involved in religious matters, but he will not involve himself in religious decisions. He feels ideas — and strength of feeling is enough for him. He shows no interest in deciding the value which he gives to an idea or the comparative values he gives to more ideas than two.

Damon's lack of interest in an ordered rank of ideas explains his editing of his poems. Six of those in *Tilted Moons* should have appeared only among the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Boston Symphony Orchestra Beethoven Memorial Festival Programme*, etc. Others could have taken the place of some in *Astrolabe*. If one cut out pages 15 (59-64), 72 (77-80), the core of *Tilted Moons* would appear as an oblique novel which presents in a possible sequence (partly by its construction, partly by its inception) the emo-

tions, moods and sensations attendant upon love. Each poem is itself a character and plot. The core of the book implies a form which is meant to have a multiform meaning to every reader.

The weak poems have the weaknesses which one would expect in a poet who does not care for the ordering of ideas in any rank. When literature lapses from taste or into "taste" one cause may be that little ideas rule big ideas (See *Image and After-Image*). Damon's lapses from taste occur most frequently in the use of adjectives and adverbs. Just as he often lets little ideas move from their positions — so the action he often gives adjectives and adverbs is not held down to the main action.

Adjectives and adverbs are the most difficult words. It is not enough simply not to use them. One must use them as if they were verbs. Yet they must be kept back from the front plain of performance. If they alone act, we have soft writing. If they reënact the main action, the work is stiff. Adjectives and adverbs are at once of a minor and a major importance. In poetry, where diction becomes almost the peer of form, adjectives and adverbs (which slip so neatly into metre and rhyme as to seem almost to have been originally devised only for this use) can do and undo the work of stanzas. A softness or stiffness in his adjectives and adverbs appears even in some of Damon's more astylar poems. Yet in poetry it is true that a chain is stronger than its weakest link. A verse is stronger than its weakest word. And while, in lyric poetry, one stanza ought to be as good as another, even in lyric poetry every word, every verse should not be as good as every other, or if as good in degree, then certainly not in kind. Indeed, the worst fault of adjectives and adverbs is to be too good.

Damon's lapses into "taste" are as fastidiously sought after as his fastidiously false rhymes. By his lapses into "taste" I refer to his experiments in Victorian and Decadent mannerisms. These are given and are to be taken ironically. He is most experimental when least mannered and in his mannered experiments the limitations of his temperament appear not only puzzling but disconcerting. He is careless of easy effects of style, yet does not handle them as surely as he handles difficult ideas. His poetry is always the better the least taste gets into it, but he has a restless spirit and must experiment even in the Georgian. Most successful Georgian writers are successful only because the nature of their talent makes them put into this manner all

the resourceful dexterity which, if their talent were ever so little different, they would put into experiment. But Damon manages to give out ideas in the Modern and the Georgian, the Decadent and the Victorian, and is occasionally successful in any of them. Every poem in *Tilted Moons* is an idea. This raises even the frivolous poems from the level of many poems which resemble them.

In the Apocalypses and Epitaphs and in "Jesus to Judas," "Burning Bush" and "The Judging of God" from *Astrolabe*; and in "Insomnia," "Protest," "July," "Second Spring" and "The Burial of Venus" from *Tilted Moons* Damon is a poet. His wildness of imagination, his depth of sentiment, his accuracy of statement lead me to examine his verse so closely that I find it does not contain the last and final requirement which can be made of poetry. That is, I find it more oracular than prophetic. But as I do not know any prophets who are abroad nowadays, I have a use for oracles.

JOHN WHEELWRIGHT

BALM IN GILEAD?

THE NEW AMERICAN CARAVAN. *Edited by Alfred Kreymbourg, Lewis Mumford, and Paul Rosenfeld. New York. The Macaulay Company.* 1929. $3.50.

STYLE AND FORM IN AMERICAN PROSE. *By Gorham B. Munson. Garden City. Doubleday, Doran and Company.* 1929. $2.50.

The New American Caravan contains half as many words as either of its predecessors, and includes the work of twenty-nine writers, whereas seventy-two were represented in the first issue, and sixty in the second. With the exception of two or three poems, the volume is free from the mediocre by-products of more or less distinguished writers; there is nothing comparable to Edmund Wilson's excursion this side of Paradise or to Lewis Mumford's experiment in reducing spiritual autobiography to baby-talk. There is a notable increase, moreover, in the proportion of young writers: more than half the contributors are under thirty; in the first *Caravan* the proportion was approximately a sixth, and in the second not quite a third. Less than half the contributors have published books, several have published only sparingly in the magazines, and for four this is the first appearance in print. Certainly the *New American Caravan* speaks for the youthful literati, and, even if there remains a question whether most of the deserving contributions could not have found publishers elsewhere, it comes nearer than its predecessors to serving a purpose which is not served by the magazines.

The task of selection has been better performed than formerly, but it is nevertheless necessary for the critic to eliminate, with a word or two of comment, several of the contributions. Why, unless there is some preconceived notion that a play must be included, should 56 out of the 460 pages be devoted to Paul Green's "Tread the Green Grass"? Why, to refer to a more reprehensible matter, should one-fifth of the entire volume be occupied with "The Obelisk," by William Rollins, Jr.? It is, for one thing, part of a novel — not, as the publisher's blurb states, "a full length novel" — and the novel of

which it is part will doubtless be published. The practice of printing fragments of novels is in any case questionable, and when the fragment is as conventional in its autobiographic realism as Mr. Rollins' work, the editors' motives are difficult to discern. Finally, we need spend little of our time in contemplation of E. E. Cummings' untitled contribution. One rejoices in the element of humor which it introduces into an otherwise serious volume, but one wishes that it were somewhat funnier and a great deal shorter. Mr. Cummings' manipulation of the *non-sequitur* is more literary and perhaps more ingenious than the exercises in the same *genre* by Frank Sullivan and Perelman, but they at least know when to stop.

This process of elimination leaves us with nine short stories, one critical essay, and about seventy-five pages of poetry. The *Caravan's* poetry is always a puzzle to me, for I believe there is a large body of interesting and distinguished, if not quite first-rate, poetry being written in this country today, and yet approximately two-fifths of the poetry in each *Caravan* has been mediocre and another two-fifths down-right bad. In the present issue, the saving fifth includes primarily the work of Phelps Putnam and Stanley Kunitz, with, somewhat more dubiously, the work of Matthew Josephson and Lincoln Fitzell. Putnam is, as Malcolm Cowley pointed out (*The New Republic*, Nov. 6, 1929), brilliantly and expansively Byronic in his romanticism. Kunitz is not — to disagree with what Cowley said about him in the same review — fundamentally a follower of Eliot: he is not elegiac, and he does not conceal himself behind a barrier of quotations. He is, however, a member of a school with which Eliot is somewhat allied, a school which, in revolt against the diffuseness of the Victorian lyric, insists on the packed line, the function of intellect as well as emotion, the subordination of imagery to tenseness of experience. Kunitz, if his imagination continues to develop, and if he learns to dispose more graciously of syntactical problems, is certain to be an important poet.

If much of the poetry in the *Caravan* is disappointing, the short stories at least stimulate reflection on the future of prose fiction. With the exception of Jean Toomer's "York Beach," of which I shall speak later, these stories exemplify the new barbarism, which is also the new romanticism. The new barbarism has, in its general outlines, been correctly described by Malcolm Cowley (New York

Herald-Tribune Books, June 30, 1929). The writers of the stories in the *Caravan* deal with primitive conditions, primitive emotions. They reject not only the moral but also the cultural standards of what is supposed to be civilized society. One of the stories actually portrays life among savages; three stories sketch unsophisticated and more or less savage types; one story gives a detailed and realistic description of primitive survivals in a Jewish wedding ceremony; two stories have as background the purposeless, gin-soaked existence of the so-called sophisticates. The themes include castration, feminine underwear, and, of course, fornication. The language is, in most cases, appropriately bald.

That the new barbarism is the new romanticism is perhaps sufficiently obvious, but it is worth pointing out that it is not only romantic in the humanistic sense but also when romanticism is defined as escape from reality. Why do these writers adopt such themes unless it is because they are unwilling to occupy themselves with industrial America, the America of Fords and Rotary Clubs, the America that hangs breathless over the stock ticker? It might almost be maintained that our old pioneering complex is breaking out in a new spot, that our deliberate preference for hoboes and harlots is a survival of the frontier antipathy to the virtues and even the vices of the cultivated mind.

But there is another element in these stories besides barbarism and that is objectivity. If there is one prophecy that is safe to make, it is that American literature is, for the time at least, through with the subjectivism of Sherwood Anderson and his disciples. Most of the heroes and heroines of these stories are, like the heroes and heroines of Ernest Hemingway's novels, without minds, so far as the reader is concerned; and when mental processes are introduced, they are described from the outside. Action is reappearing in fiction, and the hitherto ubiquitous stream-of-consciousness is left to flow unobserved in its caverns measureless to man.

Now if the new barbarism leaves me comparatively cold, the new objectivity is considerably more heart-warming. It is at least potentially good. It seems certain that the subjective novel, with its emphasis on the experiencing mind, has gone — in Joyce and Proust, in Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf — as far as it can profitably go. It seems probable, also, that this type of fiction, even at its best, neglects certain human qualities; primarily, it neglects the will.

This brings us to Mr. Yvor Winters' "The Extension and Reintegration of the Human Spirit Through the Poetry Mainly French and American Since Poe and Baudelaire," an essay which is as obstinate and uncompromising as its title indicates, but which may easily be more important than all the rest of the volume. What Mr. Winters is chiefly talking about is the function of the will in the face of the human dilemma. He talks about it, it seems to me, less academically and with far more feeling for the imaginative — as contrasted with the didactic — implications than the orthodox humanists; and he suggests the way in which the truth in their Olympian dogmas may be focussed on the problems of current literature.

It is the will that Mr. Winters talks about, and the will, if I understand him, not as a metaphysical entity but as an observable function of the body-mind. It is the will that the new objectivism may restore to literature. But I see few signs of that restoration in the stories in the *Caravan*. Their objectivity is, rather, the extension of that long process by which the subjectivists have pushed their search for reality further and further. Once we found reality in the currents of thought; then we probed deeper and discovered the flow of consciousness; then came the disintegration of consciousness as we probed the subconscious; and now we are back to simple deeds, having substituted Watsonian idols for Freudian. But the attitude is still passive: things are still happening *to* characters, only they happen to their bodies instead of to their minds.

This is hasty generalization about the stories in the *Caravan* but, though qualification is necessary, the chief contention is, I believe, sound. There is, however, one story in the volume which is occupied with the will, and very much occupied with it — Jean Toomer's "York Beach" — and from it we surmise that the restoration of the will to literature may be a difficult task. Mr. Toomer's hero is apparently, like Mr. Toomer himself, a disciple of Gurdieff; the will is emphasized, but only at the sacrifice of spontaneity and at the cost of an intolerable priggishness. Ernest Hemingway in *Farewell to Arms* depicts the function of the will on a lower level, but at least one believes that it is a human will that is functioning. Perhaps we do well to begin at the bottom.

Mr. Hemingway's progress will illustrate why I believe that objectivism is encouraging. It appears that he deliberately chose objec-

tivism as a literary technique, and that that technique forced him into a different, a not altogether passive, attitude toward experience. Perhaps the technique will force the young — and undoubtedly promising — writers in the *Caravan* in the same direction. At present, however, they are content to let things happen and to present heroes who let things happen. The difference between their confusion and Mr. Winters' clear-sightedness is indicative of the usual discrepancy in this age between prose and poetry, on the one hand, and criticism on the other.

The remarks on Jean Toomer and Yvor Winters provide the excuse for introducing into this already too miscellaneous review still another element. Mr. Munson's volume is a serious attempt by a serious critic to analyze the nature of American prose. I have expressed elsewhere (*The Nation*, October 2, 1929) some of my reasons for regarding this book as a failure. Mr. Munson wishes to find standards for life and literature. Like Mr. Toomer he borrows, without complete assimilation, the ideas of others; unlike Mr. Winters, he fails to base his principles upon a sound and arduous study of literature itself. The book is simply synthetic, a melange of Babbitt, Orage, and Gurdieff; and it might be added that Mr. Munson does not seem to have profited greatly from his own study of prose masters.

GRANVILLE HICKS

FROM AN IVORY TOWER

HENRY JAMES' CRITICISM. *By Morris Roberts. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.* 1929. $2.50.

In 1906 when Henry James began to prepare the collected edition of his novels and tales, he decided to revise all his work, as well as to write for each of the volumes a preface in which he would indicate the source and the method of the work, and trace even something of the cluster of reminiscence, the thread of experience used as point of departure. We wonder at this enormous labor of love, expended upon twenty-five volumes; for the edition was small and unprofitable, and James, despite thirty years of celebrity, had a pathetically small public. The long technical expositions alone, written in his leisurely, elaborately mannered style (which always frightened away the wrong people), reveal how seriously Henry James regarded his whole adventure as an artist.

These curious prefaces, as he wrote to Howells, were to be "a sort of plea for Criticism, for Discrimination, for Appreciation on other than infantile lines. They ought, collected together . . . to form a sort of comprehensive manual or *vade-mecum* for aspirants in our arduous profession." There was the story of one's hero, he would say, and then there was also "the story of one's story." A great portion of his fiction, as well, is devoted to the drama of the creative effort, as he watched it in himself; and his exquisite letters are deeply colored by the passion for formal perfection which ruled him, much like poor Flaubert in the celebrated hunt for the *mot juste*. The adventure of art was almost the only thing that happened to Henry James, and thanks to this, he became, in a particular sense, a very great critic. Intensely aware always of the processes of literature he addressed himself rather to the informed taste which he presumed in the literary initiate. The power of perception worked in him at an intense pitch; he could scarcely read a contemporary novel without mentally taking it apart, or imagining it rewritten. And so his criticisms seem more instructive, more professional by far than those of the famous Victorian critics who were largely concerned with the moral or the social lessons of great works. One can think of no critic of recent times whose

observations were so fashioned to the usage of the actual craftsman. The reading of his stories of "the literary life," his essays, and especially his letters might prove most stimulating for many who tend only to imitate the fashionable and popular models. James opens the mind to infinite possibility and variety inherent in the prose form, if there is but energy and enterprise enough.

In the light of a growing curiosity, nowadays, as to literary method, Mr. Roberts' monograph is a valuable and rather fascinating bit of scholarship. The mere collation of so many of James' views in an organized plan — a difficult task, at that! — will surprise those who are unfamiliar with his power of epithet, and his almost tormented sensitiveness for shades of distinction and reaction; the influence of the author of *The Golden Bowl* upon many modern writers such as Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, and even James Joyce, will be all the better understood.

The heritage of puritanism received by James in his New York and New England youth is remarked by Mr. Roberts. The elder James had unconventional notions of education; but one feels that he practiced them, after all, in the secure knowledge that neither William nor Henry would ever stray very far. Thus, when Henry James as a young man is exposed to French atmosphere an interesting struggle is provoked in his conscience. He becomes a dual character swayed between his reservations against the gross, the sensual in French literary life and all that free discussion, articulateness, intelligence about art which was so typical of Paris in the '70s and '80s. At first, in the earliest reviews, he is indignant at the Naturalists because "adultery is their only theme," and their treatment of it is "vicious and arid." But thereafter, there is a steady growth in him toward sympathy for the most self-conscious literary school of the age; there is, in fact, a progression over a great many years, an evolution of temperament up to his final period, which offers a fascinating opportunity for the study of an intellectual drama, and which Mr. Roberts, I fear, has failed to exploit.

Puritanism became largely a *personal* affair with James as time passed. (We must remember that it is only the public display of puritanism that arouses so much reaction nowadays.) James places characters of integrity in his novels against characters of other kinds,

largely because he clings to a system of values, the moral values which he believed to be Anglo-Saxon, or Victorian, if you wish. Yet his strong moral sense was colored by his aesthetic preoccupations; and he arrived at a theory of artistic freedom that was very eloquent and daring enough in its time. He became virtually the spokesman for the French school in England and America, urging their objectiveness, their finished style and design against the sentimental formlessness of English fiction with its "three-decker" novels. He could even defend Maupassant and Zola, while regretting their limited vision of the range of human character. The novelist, he felt, must be at complete liberty to feel and say, to be true to his perceptions, regardless of public opinion and all critical rules, distinctions, classifications. "Make something fine," he wrote, "in the form that shall suit you best, according to your temperament."

In his "later manner," in keeping with the change of tone in his novels, James underwent a further evolution which drew him away from the French realists. He worked alone, in his house at Rye, over his great triad of novels — far from Mayfair and its dinner and tea-parties to which he had come with faithful notebook for so many years. He was no longer an apologist for realism. The only worthwhile criteria for him now were how living, how interesting a book could be, how many "true meanings" the artist aided to be born. The tendency of *The Ambassadors, The Golden Bowl, The Wings of the Dove,* was certainly to idealize his subjects in a classical sense. Raw life, photographed, dispassionately recorded no longer concerned him. The great artist must do something with life. The Naturalists, he felt now, had nothing to show us in the way of the operation of character, the possibilities of conduct, the part played in the world by the *idea.* He preferred Hamlet and Lear as characters, because they were so "finely aware" of what was happening to them, whereas most ordinary people weren't aware of anything. In his last and finest novels, James clung to the plausible most skillfully, but idealized his characters by endowing them with sensitiveness and consciousness to an amazing degree, with a wealth of human grace and complexity which he certainly drew out of his own strange organism. Art, as he announced from his ivory tower, was what you added to life, which, unsmelted, is a "splendid waste" or a dull chaos; art "muffled the ache

of the actual"; the image, in short, was superior to the thing itself.

Henry James' dislike of Flaubert, which Mr. Roberts is troubled by, becomes quite understandable now. James longed to lift subjects above the level of mere anecdote, and place them within the sphere of drama. He would rather not drift with the turbid flood of life, but would endeavor to extract its finest importance from his subject, "causing its parts to flower together into some splendid, special sense." He forecast the reaction against such faithful realism as *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenine*, and urged in their place an action all simplified and unified, having a "luminous centre," an "acute central consciousness," and the dignity of classical drama. To his passion for design, for polyphonous prose rhythms, was wedded a love of seriousness and grace, delicacy and integrity of character. He is a spokesman of *l'art pour l'art* (figuring among the "horrid company" of the Yellow Book); while he clings to fixed, honorable, if modestly propounded, moral values.

"It is art that *makes* life," he wrote at the end; "makes interest, makes importance . . . and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process!"

It would be long to consider here how well James exemplified his philosophy of art in such a story as *The Altar of the Dead*, or in the beautiful mazes of *The Wings of the Dove*, with its magic of door after door opening for us. But certainly his theory is articulate and vigorous enough in the many works of criticism cited by Mr. Roberts. Certain of these, as the essay on Zola, in *Notes on Novelists*, are as composed and dramatic as any of his best tales, while having a splendid logic. He believed that the critic must be "sentient and restless," always reacting, reciprocating and penetrating, in order to be a "valuable instrument." And so it is truly exciting to see him respond to his opportunities. He had an unequalled knowledge of the craft of fiction; and though he confines his readings chiefly to the nineteenth century in France, Italy and England, his theory for this very reason becomes all the more explicit. One may return to him again and again, with humility, and still find an inexhaustible fund of suggestion. This enormous knowledge of his craft Mr. Roberts has indicated unmistakably in James, while lacking, one feels, the equipment and the experience fairly to measure it.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

QUICK FINGERS

THE NOISE THAT TIME MAKES. *By Merrill Moore. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Company.* 1929. $2.00.

A few years ago, a group of University men, instructors and students at Vanderbilt, who were interested in the writing of poetry, used to meet more or less regularly in Nashville. Because they had to call themselves something, they took the name of *Fugitives*. They published a small magazine, to which they contributed anonymously, and later brought out an anthology. The more prominent members of the group were John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson; Merrill Moore, at that time an undergraduate, was a prolific contributor at the group meetings. "Another member would bring to the meeting his small stint of poetry," writes Mr. Ransom, "but Moore would bring twenty, thirty, or fifty brand-new sonnets as his exhibit — more than his time-allowance would let him read. We often thought of a procedure which a consideration for his dignity as well as our own prevented us from carrying out: we wanted to offer publicly to match Moore against the world; we would have locked him and the challenger in a room for a given time, and then compared the poetry which they brought out with them; we knew that Moore would be far in the lead for quantity, and we were not uneasy as to the quality." Indeed, if the hundreds of sonnets which Dr. Moore is reputed to have hidden away in valises and scrap-books, are as good as these in *The Noise That Time Makes*, Mr. Ransom is justified in his rather naive boast. Here is a century of poems as vigorous and exciting as any I have read since the publication of Mr. Ransom's own excellent book, *Chills and Fever*. And — startling *tour de force* in a day of jaded freedom! — they are all sonnets.

At least, I suppose they are sonnets. Like the fine sonnets of E. E. Cummings (such a one, for instance, as that beginning *Along the brittle treacherous bright streets*), they violate every convention of the form; they are disdainfully irregular, in metric, in rhyme, and in structure. There is hardly one of them that would not reduce a class in English Versification to hysteria. The most formal of them is cal-

culated to drive the average College theoretician mad. But unconventional or not, each of them contains one element essential to the sonnet: single purposeful force; and in all of them are apparent two qualities essential to good poetry: sincerity and guts. Neither term is easily to be defined. If, like the demonstrator at a class-room autopsy, I can dissect a poem and say to the Hungry Sheep, *Here, you see, is the poem's soul; and here — please observe — are the bowels of its strength;* then I can be pretty sure that the subject of my autopsy is not a poem at all, but a rhetorical exercise, a series of poetical effects. One of the marks of your true poem is that it defies analysis. And so it is with Dr. Moore's sonnets. Here is one of the best:

Warning to One

Death is the strongest of all living things
And when it happens do not look in the eyes
For a dead fire or a lack-lustre there,
But listen for the words that fall from lips
Or do not fall. Silence is not death;
It merely means that the one who is conserving breath
Is not concerned with tattle and small quips.

Watch the quick fingers and the way they move
During unguarded moments — words of love
And love's caresses may be cold as ice
And cold the glitter of engagement rings;
Death is the sword that hangs on a single hair,
And that thin tenuous hair is no more than love
And yours is the silly head it hangs above.

Now, it is easy to criticize the technic here: to point out, first of all, the irregularities of division, of rhyme, of line, with the poignantly dissident effect of strangeness thus produced; then to comment on the casually precise diction — a characteristic of all Fugitive verse; to note, perhaps, the poet's debt to the Ransom of *Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree,* or the Donne of *A Nocturnall Upon S. Lucies Day;* to draw attention to the finality, and at the same time the improvisatory lightness, of the sonnet. So much for the textbooks; and so much will suffice for nine poems out of ten. The tenth poem, however, eludes exposition of this sort; the tenth poem's essence, unsubstantial and not to be apprehended, lives far below its many surfaces; it is eternally imminent, never known. And Dr. Moore is a good poet, not because he is facile, skilful, precise, and keenly observ-

ant: but because there is an exciting number of these tenth poems among his sonnets. In his sinewy, sweetly acid verses he has managed to combine the three elements of which all valid poetry is compounded: a gracious technic, a sound sense, and an undefinable, unlimited power of suggestion.

The Noise That Time Makes is an important book. Like *Chills and Fever* and Donald Davidson's *The Tall Men*, it is a sign that the present estate of American poetry is a good estate. Beyond the *Atlantics* with their antiseptic ghosts of dead poems, beyond the violently youthful Dr. Williams with his little mad reviews, there is a group of men from Nashville who are neither pompous nor puerile. They are not concerned with theorizing or with propaganda. Interested in the writing of poetry, they are doing what few of our contemporaries will take the trouble to do: they are writing poetry.

DUDLEY FITTS

THE RAISING OF LITERARY CRITICS

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. *A Study in Litterae Inhumaniores. By Norman Foerster. Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina Press.* 1929. $1.00.

In *The Sacred Wood* Mr. T. S. Eliot speaks of criticism as being a development of sensibility. Curiously enough, such sensibility may lead to two diametrically opposite types of critics — the impressionist and the humanist. For your true impressionist is trying no less to do what your Aristotelian humanist does: to make the past re-live in terms of present feeling (since there are no surer terms) and with philosophic and aesthetic overtones.[1]

Mr. Foerster, however, does not conceive, either in *The American Scholar* (part of which appeared in the last number of THE HOUND & HORN) or in his *American Criticism*, that an analogy of this kind exists. Impressionism, to him as to Mr. Babbitt, means any undisciplined dealing with the immediate and the actual. He feels that it is eleutheromania or hyperaesthesia, that the hyperaesthete or eleutheromaniac cannot construct, or, as Mr. Eliot has it, cannot "ériger en lois." Mr. Foerster would not appreciate, for example, the painter Seurat or even the most deft of the Impressionists because they glorify the momentary. Yet just here is where the humanist critic, if he is not aware, will make a slip. The theories of Seurat were based not only upon the colour-divisionism theory of Chevreuil but also upon universal laws of human psychology relating to the affective principles of descending, ascending, curving and perpendicular lines. If this is something of which no Greek, no Phidias, no Aristotle would have approved, I should like to know it.

Because Mr. Foerster is a humanist and not an impressionist, his thesis in *The American Scholar* is to reduce the number of literary historians, who are impressionists, and to provide for the increase of

[1] A paraphrase of Mr. Eliot's words that "a literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art — and these . . . are, when valid, perhaps not to be called emotions at all." (*The Sacred Wood*, p. 11.)

real literary critics, who would be humanists. He believes that our graduate schools are full of literary historians. A literary historian is a critic who attempts to fit the facts of the past among which he grubs into the phenomena of time and change, a student with a barbaric enthusiasm for the flux of philosophy. This is the method of Hegel and has been generally taught to the American scholar working for his doctorate.

Students who start off with their true bent to be literary critics and who become literary historians are, to Mr. Foerster, the danger to scholarship and culture. In this study he pleads for liberalizing our rather Teutonic master's and doctor's degree with the French dissertation system. In detail, he would have the master's degree in letters represent not the specialism of the graduate school alone but the liberal and even romantic point of view of the undergraduate, such as "Gefühl ist alles" and "a good time was had by all." As for the doctor's degree, he would allow it to be conferred only upon well-rounded scholars, who by combining what is known in France as both erudite (scientific) and literary criticism have shown that they had attained "an intimate perception of the human value of literature." Mr. Foerster feels that a new generation is coming that will attempt "to dominate the temporal flow of things and thought" and which will be superior to the personal estimates of romantic impressionism and the historical ones of objectivism and philology. If that generation produced a couple of Sainte-Beuves, one would not object. This reviewer, nevertheless, has some fears of humanism:

The humanism of today has too many rules. A certain mental paralysis attends the reading of more than twenty pages of its tenets. There are chapters in Mr. Brownell's *Democratic Distinction in America* and in Mr. Babbitt's *New Laokoön*, notably those on Formal Education in the one and The Theory of Spontaneity in the other, which are vague from either too many and too learned words, like the words in a physician's vocabulary, or from too many citations. Furthermore, the citations are apt to be taken from stale rather than from up-to-date material. There are prolix pages, too, in Mr. Foerster's concluding chapter of *American Criticism*, where he undertakes to show what is the proper critical attitude before a work of art, although the present volume may be cleared of vagueness.

I do not wish to be hard on humanism, for I think it is on the right track in its Aristotelian love of the universal and the unchanging,

while no other humanist perhaps has been so sympathetic in his appreciation of the values of vital impressionism as Mr. Foerster. Mr. Babbitt certainly has not, since he seems to deplore in *The New Laokoön*, his most gracious as it is his most considerable book, modern tone-painting in music, such as Debussy's, and modern skyscrapers. The humanists do not evidently appreciate that their suppressing a comparison of, say, Debussy's music with Monet's pond-lily series is too rigid. Why break a butterfly on the wheel of a categorical imperative? What harm in being allowed to make a correct association of ideas? Why this ruling out of art of the immediate and the actual? We would then have none of Stevenson's short stories, no Mrs. Dalloway, no Proust, nor soliloquy of any of the best sort. It is the lack of the vital and the actual that has tended to make humanism, as it made neo-classicism and formalism, a feast of reason without the alembic of emotion or religion.

Mr. Foerster thinks above all that his plan for liberalizing the graduate school with the ideas of the undergraduate would attract to it better students. I do not know. I only recall the phrase of Mr. Brownell that the centripetal force of elective affinity is absent from the elective system. If this is so, no amount of Mr. Foerster's combination of erudite and literary criticism — Mr. Foerster has praiseworthily in mind the French lycée — will brighten the graduate school. The trouble is not that the graduate school is not like the undergraduate school, but vice versa. As the latter becomes more like the lycée, the better the students will be, for those whose intelligence or lack thereof cannot stand the test will be dropped and cease to be a burden to the resources of both their home and their nation.

No, humanism is heir to the faults of all criticism: like a lawyer's brief, it is a postfact. Some of the best criticism — the criticism of honest observation — is personal reaction or impressionism but informed by humanistic standards. Humanism thus adds to the vital foundation of criticism stress upon form, dogma, and a sense of balance. In so far as Mr. Foerster would dust off our dustiest doctorates, he is right; but in so far as he distrusts impressionism as a method of putting us in touch with beauty, he is wrong. At times the limbo of conjectural emotions in which a D. H. Lawrence mulls, though neither admirable nor right, is indeed refreshing after an overdose of humanistic common-sense.

JAMES W. LANE

EDMUND WILSON AS POET

POETS, FAREWELL! *By Edmund Wilson. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $2.00.

If Allen Tate is correct in defining a journalist as one who does not stay long enough with his subject matter to learn what it is about, then Mr. Wilson is too often a journalist when he essays verse. His failures occur mainly because of a delusive facility, which shows itself at its best in such echoes of the later style of Yeats as occur in *A Young Girl Indicted for Murder* and at its worst in his light verse. The poems included in the section called *Nonsense,* and a few others that should have appeared there, might have been amusing enough one by one in manuscript, but, collected in a professedly serious volume, they are mildly exasperating. The power to write light verse that is poetry is a special gift, possessed in all likelihood by only two Americans of Mr. Wilson's generation, Malcolm Cowley and Archibald MacLeish; when Mr. Wilson attempts the genre he merely writes newspaper verse that is not discernibly better than the usual trade article. His facility betrays him again in such a piece as *The Lido,* in which a young girl yields her *frêles faveurs* in a mildly Proustain setting, the entire affair being treated in terms of the atmospheric effects. *Copper and White* is barely more than a newspaper report of similar material; his short prose pieces are extremely weak, and for more or less similar reasons.

Somewhat more interesting are the group of poems under the title of *Stucco and Stone* and the piece called *Boboli Gardens,* poems that represent Mr. Wilson's contribution to the contemporary adventures in rhymed Parnassianism undertaken chiefly by the professed revoltés —and revoltées—against the unrhymed Parnassianism of H. D. The first poem under the first title has the enameled suavity that, being meaningless, one can permit without irritation to no one save Gautier; the third poem of the group is looser but more charming. The last three stanzas of *Boboli Gardens* are particularly lovely, though they shade out of something like Samain into something vaguely reminiscent of Mr. Yeats's *Presences.* It is possibly worth mentioning that none of the Parnassianism of the last ten years, fash-

ionable as some of it has been, will bear even a moment's comparison with the bleak choral grandeur of a seldom noted poem by Agnes Lee, a poem called *A Statue in a Garden,* written, I believe, nearly twenty years ago.

One's objection to Mr. Wilson's assumption of the Yeatsian armor is not to the garment as such, for it is a good one, nor to imitation, which is necessary and desirable to a certain extent. But it is not a sufficient discipline for the wearing of that particular costume to admire the grand manner in general and the Yeatsian grand manner in particular. A traditional grand manner, ready for anyone to assume, occurs only when there is a traditional discipline and morality by which everyone is prepared. No such discipline now exists; Mr. Yeats's manner has grown out of his to say the least strenuous and life-long if somewhat idiosyncratic discipline; it is an intensely personal thing. It might conceivably be taken over in a measure by another poet, but only by a poet who had in a sense earned the right, who had performed a comparable amount or kind of moral labor. Mr. Wilson sometimes seems to rattle a trifle loosely in the armor. The fact that Mr. Wilson is intellectually a good many degrees less innocent than Mr. Yeats does not affect this particular situation, or at least not in Mr. Wilson's favor, even though Mr. Yeats's moral (and poetic) results are frequently seriously weakened by their chimeric bases. One of the factors contributing to Mr. Yeats's ultimate stylistic effect is the very sincerity of his innocence, a kind of pathetic nobility, any part of which would be out of place in Mr. Wilson's work.

It would be unfair to dwell on the weak poems in Mr. Wilson's book did they not embody vices that seem in constant danger of invading his best work and cheapening it. He approaches his muse with just a little too confident a swagger and frequently suffers as he deserves; for a secure mastery of style proceeds normally out of an awkwardness that is several stages beyond Mr. Wilson's particular kind of smoothness, an awkwardness that is born of humility before basic difficulties and that is overcome only by pretty heavy labor.

The book, in spite of all one can say against it, has its fine moments. *Infection,* though a shade too dependent on Yeats, is admirable; and admirable likewise is the poem entitled *To a Painter Going Abroad,* despite its slight excess of minor European geography. This latter poem contains a statement so finely phrased as:

Tell her I know what desperate pastime fills
The summer's slow defeat —

and it is definite and firm throughout. Best of all is the piece called *Provincetown,* which I quote entire:

We never from the barren down,
Beneath the silver-lucid breast
Of drifting plume, gazed out to drown
Where daylight whitens to the west.

Here never in this place I knew
Such beauty by your side, such peace —
These skies that brightening imbue
With dawn's delight the day's release.

Only, upon the barren beach,
Beside the gray egg of a gull,
With that fixed look and fervent speech,
You stopped and called it beautiful.

Lone as the voice that sped the word! —
Gray-green as eyes that ate its round! —
The desert dropping of a bird,
Bare-bedded in the sandy ground.

Tonight, where clouds like foam are blown,
I ride alone the surf of light —
As — even by my side — alone,
That stony beauty burned your sight.

The poem is, for the present reviewer, one of the best lyrics of recent years; and it suffices, along with a few others, to lift the book from the ruck of a good deal of amateurishness to the intense elegance of the amateur in life and in art at his finest.

YVOR WINTERS

THE PLUMED SERPENT

IDOLS BEHIND ALTARS. *By Anita Brenner. New York. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $5.00.

In *Idols Behind Altars* a young American woman born and educated in Mexico attempts the difficult task of trying to explain her adopted country to American readers. "Why is Mexico the way it is?" and "Why do Mexicans act the way they do?" are not easy questions. The history of foreign books on Mexico is filled with the corpses of attempts to answer them. Miss Brenner, however, has approached the problem from a little different point of view, and as a result has succeeded far better than most of her predecessors. Her book is a book of artists — for it is only as such that Mexicans can be understood. Mexico is "a nation which establishes a school for sculpture before thinking of a Juvenile Court, and which paints the walls of its buildings much sooner than it organizes a Federal Bank." (p. 315.)

Miss Brenner's career is unique. Raised from the nursery on a diet of Mexican folklore, superstition and popular ballads, she spent her girlhood in the midst of the Revolution on a hacienda near Aguascalientes. To her, Villa was no remote bandit hero to be killed and resuscitated daily in the newspapers, but an all-important actuality. The soldiers bathing in the irrigation canal or slaughtering her father's cattle, and their wives begging over the picket fence for flowers to take to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe or running to get water for their wounded men were as much a part of her daily life as feeding the ducks or helping to milk her father's cows. From the ranch and the Revolution she graduated to the University of Mexico, the oldest institution of higher learning in the Americas, founded over eighty years before Harvard. Here in Mexico City she came in contact with a new type, the metropolitan bourgeois, and learned what happens to the Indian when he deserts the country for the city's slum. Here also she met the artists, teachers and scholars, the greatest figures of the "Mexican Renaissance." Her equipment for the preparation of this book was made complete by a commission she received from the university to undertake an investigation of Mexican art.

Miss Brenner's book is divided into three parts of approximately

equal length. Part One constitutes an introduction to the Mexican character and gives a general history of Mexico from early Pre-Columbian times down to the Revolution. On the whole this is the least interesting portion of the book. Other authors have handled the subject with more interest and with greater clarity. Part Two is devoted to a general discussion of the lives of the Mexican people, their religion, their popular art, and the Revolution. Here Miss Brenner is at her best, especially in such places as where she describes the position of the *petate*, or reed mat, in the life of the nation, or of the *vacilada*, that peculiar Mexican laughter, in the character of the people. The Revolution is handled masterfully. Here is the bad boy Villa, popular hero and the subjects of poets "who rather hoped but never quite believed Villa would save whatever it was they wanted saved." (p. 213.) Here is Zapata, the martyr subject of hymns who with fifty thousand pesos on his head learned to read after he became a general. And here is Filipe Carrillo, longshoreman, governor, railroad engineer, the unarmed hero of Yucatan, "shot in the back by a coward." (p. 223.) The author has translated many of the popular ballads of the time and Felipe's tragic death is told along with stories of other heroes of the Revolution.

The third and last section of the book is devoted to a discussion of the artists of modern Mexico. There is passing mention of various accomplishments in literature, music and architecture, but it is not in these fields that Mexico has done her finest work. It is in painting, and especially in mural painting in the fresco technique, that Mexico has become internationally famous.

The figure of Diego Rivera stands colossal among the painters of our time. Not only is he the leader of one of the most creative groups of artists working anywhere in the world today but he is perhaps the single most powerful influence for sanity in modern painting. The power of his conceptions and the straightforward simplicity of his technique make the *isms* of Paris and elsewhere seem but weak and futile experimentings. Rivera does not paint for the patrons of Place Vendôme art dealers or for the purchasing agents of American museums, nor yet for any "enlightened few" — whoever they may be. Rivera paints for the people of Mexico — the Indians. They, their lives, their occupations, their festivals, and their heroes are his subjects and his inspiration. His work is the fruit of the Revolution, and to

Mexico the Revolution is not merely an interesting recent historical event but the most important fact in all history. "The return to native values" (p. 231) is its keynote. Rivera's work has made him a political force in all Latin America. "Nowhere as in Mexico has art been so organically a part of life, at one with the national ends and the national longings." (p. 32.) "Nowhere as in Mexico has art so intimately been linked to the fate of its people." (p. 244.) To the Mexican artist the subject is as important as the style — perhaps more important. "Art for art's sake is an aesthetic fallacy; art for the people is a phrase of inconsistent and hypocritical sentimentalism. Art is necessarily a thing of the people, not an abstract concept, nor a vehicle for exploiting whims." (p. 245.)

The first work of the "Mexican Renaissance" was done under Rivera's leadership by a group of painters known as the "Revolutionary Syndicate of Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors." This was a truly coöperative organization — at least in theory. The group on all occasions acted as a unit and the artists frequently helped on one another's pictures. The painters, masons, laborers and apprentices worked together and on an equal footing. The highest wages received averaged four dollars a day. The Syndicate sought definitely to ally itself with the laborer not only in theory but in practice.

After describing the early activity of the Syndicate, the difficulties it encountered and its final disbandment, Miss Brenner proceeds to devote a chapter to each of its principal painters: *Siqueiros*, son of wealthy, conservative parents, at sixteen a drummer boy in the Revolution, sent by the Carranza government to study in Europe, covers the walls of the National Preparatory School with unsigned frescoes and then leaves Mexico City with the pictures half finished to sit on strike committees in Guadalajara, convinced "that he must build an 'organic' place for art, or abandon painting." (p. 264.) *Orozco*, the "Mexican Goya," with his left arm a stump at the wrist, "the only one of his great contemporaries who has not studied in Europe" (p. 270), draws powerful cartoons for Revolutionary publications and later returns from tinting enlarged photographs in California to shock the old ladies of Mexico City's bourgeoisie by his "monstrous Indians with bull's eyes." (p. 254.) *Charlot*, Paris born descendent of Mexican- and Russian-raised French and Spanish-Jewish ancestors, student of Mathias Grünewald while with the French army of occupation,

sets out to visit an uncle in Mexico City where he paints the first mural (also the first fresco) in the National Preparatory School and stays to copy ancient Mayan frescoes and bas-reliefs for the archaeologists of Carnegie Institute and to make sketches "of women in *rebozos*, carrying baskets, babies, flowers." (p. 308.)

Here also are the lesser known men: *Goitia*, mystic, "mad" painter of Xochimilco, author of unsigned canvases of sad Indians, mourners, and dead men dangling from trees. *Posada*, the "Mexican Daumier," cartoonist, "illustrator of ballads, . . . the prophet of two revolutions" (p. 185), and "the greatest artist in Post-Conquest Mexico" according to Rivera. *Pintao*, goat herder, geologist, woodcarver, the living proof that in Mexico time is of no importance, that "the same elements produce similar results . . . a hundred years apart." (p. 92.) And a dozen others.

In style Miss Brenner's writing is not always fortunate. At its best it is clear, forceful and capable of portraying events with considerable character. At its worst it is difficult and almost without meaning. The context does not help to clarify the following:

> The magic compact ring of voices spirals on sob and falsetto wail around the melody and tale Mexican mood. Mood of poetry in twilight, landscape, gray, grayer, purple and black, burnt at the edges; human with a small bell, and a swathed conic hatted bundle hedged against a black doorway, making a tiny musical lament. (p. 179.)

Throughout a considerable part of the book the reader must either plow along paragraph after paragraph undisturbed by the mere fact that he really doesn't quite know what it is all about, or else imagine himself back in high school and go over the text as if he were studying Virgil. The latter hardly seems worthwhile — and for that matter neither does the former. A well developed ability to skip will be useful in reading this volume. Miss Brenner's style, however, is often excellent. Some of the descriptions of the Revolution for example could hardly have been better done.

The book is on the whole well illustrated, containing a great variety of photographs of primitive and popular art of all kinds, as well as many line cuts reproducing cartoons, broadside illustrations and details from early manuscripts. As with many books of this type, however, when it comes to a discussion of individual artists there is frequently an insufficient number of reproductions to exemplify their

work. For example, though Rivera has done over one hundred and sixty-eight frescoes up to the present time, Miss Brenner presents only six reproductions — and four of the six are details and one a sketch. Each illustration is numbered and at the end of the book is a section entitled "Notes on Illustrations" containing some discussion of most of the pictures. It would have been far easier for the reader if the shorter of the notes had been placed under the pictures described and the longer ones at the end of each chapter. Arbitrarily mixed in with these notes, where you would least expect to find it, is a lot of valuable information on the lives and works of the painters. However, as none of this is referred to in the general index it is not easily available. Also there is no index whatever to the reproductions themselves, a most unfortunate omission.

In its physical make-up the book is inexcusably bulky, its leaves being made of what might more nearly be described as cardboard than paper. Across the top of each page extends a heavy black bar which, though evidently intended to "lend character," only results in an ugly unbalanced page.

Miss Brenner could have greatly increased the pleasure of her readers by furnishing some key to the pronunciations of the Mexican names, especially those of Indian origin. It is not without interest to know that *v* is usually pronounced like *b* in such names as Rivera, that *Calles* does not rime with *Dallas*, and that the pronunciation of *Guadalupe* and *Oaxaca* both begin with a *w*. Such names as *Netzahualcoyotl*, *Chichen-Itza*, *Huitzilopochtli*, *Quetzalcoatl*, and *Xochimilco* can be a joy forever when you know how, but are only a source of mental anguish when you do not.

HOWARD T. FISHER

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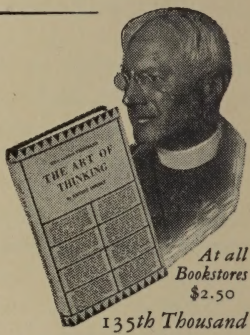

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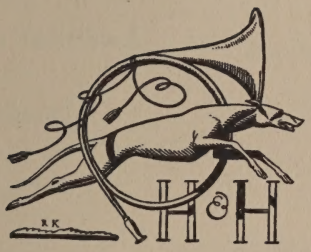

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THE
HOUND & HORN
Vol. III, No. 3 April-June, 1930

COMMENT

IN this number we begin Chronicles on Music, Drama and Fine Arts, which will continue from quarter to quarter. The Chronicles will not attempt to review all events. All they should attempt is an analysis of events that are enjoyable in themselves or that contain a promise of development; some matter and medium that might be further exploited; some discovery of an appreciative and responsible audience. The Chronicles will receive their sanction if they further the establishment of a technique, a common explored world, and a conscious attitude within a convention of ideas among both the artists and the society to which they appeal. The establishment of a technique, a common world, ideas and a society will supply a national capital or provincial capitals. Without capitals there have been no cultures. These statements are abstract. They must be when artists are nomads and the public is scattered.

MUSIC
DRAMA
FINE ARTS

STUART SHERMAN

DURING the presidential campaign of 1916 Stuart Sherman, writing to an academic colleague, expressed his views on the political situation. Nothing in Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge's *Life and Letters*[1] helps us to characterize him as an intellectual figure more sharply. "I am for Wilson," he wrote, "for a large number of reasons set forth by democrats and others. . . . He strikes me as the most civilized mind that has appeared prominently in public life in my time; and I think he will do more, far more, to civilize the public mind and conscience of America than anyone else in sight. . . . He has persuasion, charm, elevation of style, genuine high quality of thought and feeling in his public utterances. . . . Wilson has genius, too [as well as Roosevelt], and of the refined quality; there is a certain French element in the man's mind, a certain genuine urbanity, amenity, and distinguished intellectual quality which I think are very good for the American people, and which they will learn to value more and more when they get over their appetite for the coarser fare to which they have been chiefly accustomed in the past."

In these sentences we have, to use an old phrase, the real Stuart Sherman. His interest for later times — indeed, his interest for us — is that he embodies, more completely than any other writer, the moral and intellectual quality of the Wilsonian era; and it would not be farther from the truth than most phrases get to call him the Woodrow Wilson of

[1] *Life and Letters of Stuart P. Sherman.* By Jacob Zeitlin and Homer Woodbridge. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 1929. $10.00.

literary criticism. Even as personalities the two men had much in common: in both there is the same moral fervor, never genuinely clarified; the same rather dry idealism; the same capacity to inspire personal loyalty and to provoke personal rather than disinterested criticism; the same singular lapses of candor; the same combination of inflexibility and fickleness; the same irreducible salience as men. More specifically Sherman was essentially Wilsonian in his point of view: his "philosophy," like Wilson's, was the product of inherited Protestantism and old-fashioned Jeffersonian confidence in the plain man. In his early life it was the prestige of his Congregational forebears that had the upper hand: in his later years it was the Jeffersonian tradition; at no point did he wander beyond the concentric circles of those two consistent loyalties. One has only to re-read *The New Freedom* with Stuart Sherman's life and work freshly in mind in order to feel the full weight of the analogy: the two men face their intricate contemporary problems with the same high-mindedness, and simplify their solutions with the same belated formulas. Only the cynical will fail to detect what is somehow precious in both.

But the moment for which Wilson and Sherman were spokesmen has irrevocably passed, and it is now a question of estimating the permanent vitality of their thought. Exaggerated claims have been made for both men, and for Stuart Sherman no less than for Woodrow Wilson. His dramatic change of profession in his early forties and the shocking abruptness of his death obscured for the time being the real value of his work. It was so natural to regret the untimely passing of a vivid personality, and the premature termination of an interesting personal experiment, that many people were led to misjudge the tragedy. It was very generally alleged

that Sherman had abandoned an earlier point of view, was passing through a period of profound readjustment, and would ultimately have worked his way through to a position that would have made him the critical leader of a new age. Certainly he had broken off what relations he had had with the men who influenced his twenties — Professor Babbitt and Mr. More; certainly he was writing of many "young people" without his former superciliousness; certainly his personal life — as one gathers from Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge — was taking on a warmth and vivacity it had not had in his early maturity. But these changes have been vastly overstated. To re-read the essays Sherman wrote for the *Tribune* in his last two years — the essays collected in *Critical Woodcuts* (1926) and *The Main Stream* (1927) — is not to feel that he was on the verge of a momentous discovery; is not to feel that he would long have continued to speak with authority for a later period. It is to feel that his mind had already demonstrated its full quality and betrayed its pronounced limitations.

Clues to those limitations are scattered throughout the two volumes. Everywhere there is the stamp of the academic liberal, everywhere the stamp of the literary popularizer. In an essay on Edith Wharton, "The Mother's Recompense" is welcomed as "another symmetrical, flawlessly finished little masterpiece." The prose of Anatole France is elsewhere characterized as "paragraph by paragraph . . . the most perfect speech uttered in our time." Mr. Wilbur Abbott's preposterous book on *The New Barbarians* is respectfully discussed as a counter-irritant to "the depressing cynicism of chronic croakers who are enjoying 'the decay of capitalist civilization,' 'the failure of democracy,' 'the bankruptcy of political government,' and 'the downfall of western civilization.'" Of Don

Marquis' *The Dark Hours*: "I believe this to be a great tragedy, greatly conceived and written with austere sincerity." In perhaps the most heated essay of all Stevenson is defended against his recent detractors as incarnating the noblest sides of the modern temper. Chekhov is praised, not as a writer, but as a man who early formulated for himself a sound "ethical code." Of *An American Tragedy*: "I do not know where else in American fiction one can find the situation here presented dealt with so fearlessly, so intelligently [sic], so exhaustively, so veraciously, and *therefore* with such unexceptionable moral effect." And if, in the attempt to get beyond particular judgments, one tries to take in the drift of the two books as a whole, one is merely bewildered by the vagueness and looseness of a critical method by which Sherwood Anderson and William Beebe, Rose Macaulay and Barrett Wendell, W. C. Brownell and Llewellyn Powys can be made to lie down together in the warmth of a general approbation.

The truth is, Stuart Sherman's mind was of the type in which brilliance, liveliness, susceptibility, and speed take the place of true penetration and lucidity. He was an admirable teacher, an admirable commencement speaker, and an admirable journalist: his achievements in these directions are the measure of his powers. Despite what appeared to be the rigidity of his earliest views, he was at heart an eclectic; and, like all eclectics, he shrank from committing himself to the fundamental. Much has been made of his abandonment of a youthful devotion to the system of Babbitt and More: the hospitality of his later criticism is represented as a paradoxical shift from the rigor of his first essays. But one goes back to the volume *On Contemporary Literature* (1917) and discovers, not a deep personal apprehension of the principles of humanism, but a skillful exploitation of its formulas by a brilliant young

Stevensonian who has not yet seen through his aversion to the "unpleasantness" of writers such as Dreiser, Moore, Anatole France, Wells, and Synge. At the time the essays were written, Mr. More was disconcerted by the excess of Sherman's enthusiasm for Arnold Bennett, and his failure to see "the reservations which must be made when praising his somewhat Philistine art"; and Mr. Babbitt naturally demurred at Sherman's recognition of Meredith as a true humanist. Both Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt may well have been given pause by such evidences of Sherman's perfunctory adoption of their philosophy. They might have been equally disturbed by the lack of candor with which, in the destructive essays, the facts were sometimes twisted to make them fit the formula.

A convenient example is the well-known essay on "The Exoticism of John Synge." Now that we have the letters of Sherman's young manhood to guide us it is easy to see that there was something in Synge's vein of harshness, and in the sombreness that lies behind both his comedies and his tragedies, that must have been repugnant to a man of Sherman's strenuous and sanguine make-up. But it is also true that Synge's work bears some of the familiar stigmata of romanticism, and it was upon these that Sherman leapt. Unhappily he leapt too hard, and proved so much too much as to discredit his critical insight. If Synge is to be made out a thoroughgoing romantic, at any cost, it is necessary to show that his comic spirit is Arcadian rather than corrective, and that his tragedy is based on pathetic resignation rather than on struggle. This indeed is what Sherman argues. "Synge's comedies end in a kind of ironical bewilderment. His, indeed, is outlaw comedy with gypsy laughter coming from somewhere in the shrubbery by the roadside, pealing out against church and state, and man and wife, and all the ordinances of civil life." After such a

statement one wonders whether *The Well of the Saints* and *The Playboy of the Western World* are even under consideration — or, if they are, what kinds of folly, what kinds of sham, are worthier of laughter than the follies and shams that are laughed at in them. And so of the tragedies, especially *Riders to the Sea* — it "is not a tragedy at all, because it is not a drama. . . . Protagonist in the proper sense of the word there is none; no act of the will turning against destiny as a token of human participation in that divine energy into which death resumes us all." No doubt "act of the will" needs definition; but in the ordinary sense of the phrase what else than this is the resolution of the young islander, Bartley, to take his horses across to the mainland in defiance of the natural forces that have already borne so heavily on his kin? As for *Deirdre,* Sherman says little of it; but of course it would be easy to argue that the heroine of the play defies Conchubar in a spirit not utterly unlike that in which Creon is defied by Antigone. At this point, it is true, there are differences; but Sherman says nothing of them, and he leaves us with the air of a man who has proved a case, not of a man who has clarified a truth.

The particular point would not be worth dwelling on if it were not emblematic of Sherman's inveterate shallowness. The injustice to Synge — indeed, even to the other writers dealt with in that volume — we can pretty easily afford to take calmly. It is a matter of greater moment, an occasion for more acute regret, that Sherman's next three volumes should also have failed to be deeply and decisively critical. His attention during these years was turning more and more to the problems of American life; his interest fixed itself more and more definitely on American literature and the American tradition. *Americans* (1922), *The Genius of America* (1923),

and *Points of View* (1924), are the record of that process; and to go back over them is to renew an old disappointment. In many ways Sherman was admirably qualified for the task he set himself — the task of reinterpreting American literature and clarifying the effectual American traditions so as to bridge the gap between the intellectuals and the plain man. His own personal traditions were entirely American, and he had lived in all the great sections of the republic except the far south. He had perhaps traveled too little in Europe, but he was widely read in European literatures, and his intellectual equipment was anything but provincial. He had, moreover, a true sense of the necessity of working forward from within a continuous cultural experience; he had a glimpse into the legitimate pragmatism of the moralist and the critic. But unluckily he fell a victim to the illegitimate pragmatism of the liberal and the essayist; and in consequence the total impression made by these volumes is of melting colors and blurred lines. Casuistry, if it is to pay, must be infinitely more ingenious than this.

"Our 'bourgeoisie,' no less than our 'peasantry,' are on the verge of a cultural revolt," Sherman came to feel; "they are quarrelling with the quality of their civilization." To meet the situation, Sherman gradually formulated two principles of criticism: (1) Americans must cling to and refresh their own cultural tradition, the soul of which is seventeenth-century Puritanism and nineteenth-century Transcendentalism, and its body Jeffersonian democracy; and (2) literature must be made safe for democracy; the plain man must be shown how relevant art may be to his own needs. Slippery half-truths, both of them; and how refractory they proved in Sherman's grasp! Take the essay on "What is a Puritan?" and consider whether the tough Calvinism of Endicott and

Mather could be more smilingly robbed of its sting, or whether the whole complicated historical setting could be more breezily ignored. Take the essay on Franklin and consider whether any distinctions at all are made between what was enlightened in his thought and what was merely Philistine. Take the essay on Hawthorne, and consider whether Hawthorne's real case against his civilization is ever hinted at. Or the essay on Whitman — who, it is argued, would have been a Bolshevik-baiter if he had lived in our post-bellum period. Or perhaps most strikingly of all the essay on Andrew Carnegie, as an exhibit of Sherman's uncritical acceptance of the appearance for the reality, his pervasive pragmatic regard for the *fait accompli*, his sanguine willingness to neglect the darker side of the picture. From this essay no reader would ever gather that Carnegie stood for some of the things that have made American life, in Sherman's words, "so lacking in elevation and beauty; . . . so humdrum, so dreadfully uninteresting." And indeed, from the volumes as a whole, no reader would ever gather that American history has been a very intricate tangle of creative and destructive forces, a picture painted with baroque violence of chiaroscuro. It is only in the full concreteness of their setting that Puritanism or Jeffersonianism have any valid meaning; to try to distil their pleasant essence and make it viable in a radically altered setting, is to beg questions on the threshold of disaster.

There is thus a kind of collegiate tameness and unreality in Sherman's attempt to revive American traditions. There is a kind of commencement vagueness, similarly, in his plea for the democratizing of culture. One may agree that there is a sense in which culture is radically democratic: one may agree that nothing is to be gained and much to be lost by critics who turn their back upon the plain man. And one may subscribe to

the principle which Sherman appeals to repeatedly in this connection, that great literature is deeply ethical. Agreeing with him to this extent, one would nevertheless insist that culture is truly democratic only when it preserves its own spirit of discrimination, its own rigor of preference; and that if literature is ethical it is by no means merely "moral" in the plain man's usual view. It is, I think, a painstaking and not simply a captious judgment of Sherman's middle and later writings to contend that these distinctions are rarely suggested there. The essay on censorship, for example, "liberal" as it is, assumes a crude connection between literature and conduct that no creative writer could ever act upon. In the essay on "The Genius of America" it is argued that the artist must coöperate with the prevailing mores to an extent that would be the death of true "invention." In the essay "Towards an American Type" it is argued that because the American people admire athletics, advertising, speed records, sanitation, education, and good health, their aspiration is toward a type of "athletic asceticism" which it is the business of the critical mind to foster. As if it were not the business of the critical mind to say, in the interests of ideal good, just what is amiss with a people to whom advertising and speed records are admirable things! Surely the plain man is to be properly served, not by this kind of flattery, but by the exaction from him of his best possibilities.

If sound criticism must always be *radical* criticism — if stringency, impatience, and a certain harshness are the very spirit of its method — then Sherman was not a first-rate critic. He accepted too warmly much that was hopelessly mediocre both in literature and in practice; and fought shy too cautiously of much that was dangerously first-rate. In short the "half-way" taint of the Wilsonian era infects too much of

what he did for us to regard his criticism as of more than historical interest. In that light, however, and above all *personally*, Stuart Sherman deserves a warm and friendly treatment that it has not been the purpose of this note to give him. A man may not be a first-rate literary critic and still have extraordinary and exhilarating charm as a man and even as a certain sort of writer. Such charm Stuart Sherman had in rich measure: it is the achievement of Messrs. Zeitlin and Woodbridge in their *Life and Letters* to make one conscious of it with accumulating force. Intensity as distinguished from mere vigor of emphasis is not a common quality among either schoolmasters or journalists; and intensity was the keynote of Sherman's personality. It gives the story of his career a genuine imaginative sweep, and it will doubtless long preserve him as a human being in the memory of many men who know him only through this book.

NEWTON ARVIN

TWO POEMS

HYMN TO DISPEL HATRED AT MIDNIGHT

Here where I watch the dew
That gathers by the door,
Here where the time is true
    And on the floor
My shadow stirs no more,

The slow night burns away.
Nay, neither I nor Time
Can manage quite to stay—
    We seek a clime
Bound in a moment's chime.

Men are like blades of grass
Beneath a winter sky,
The constellations pass,
    The air is dry
From star to living eye.

Hence unto God, unsought,
My anguish sets. O vain
The heart that hates! O nought
    So drenched in pain!
Grief will not turn again.

THE FALL OF LEAVES

The green has suddenly
Divided to pure flame,
Leaf-tongued from tree to tree.
Yea, where we stood it came.

This change may have no name.
Yet it was like a word
Spoken, and none to blame,
Alive where shadow stirred.

So was the instant blurred,
But as we waited there
The slow cry of a bird
Built up a scheme of air.

The vision of despair
Starts at the moment's bound,
Seethes from the vibrant air
With slow autumnal sound

Into the burning ground.

YVOR WINTERS

FLOWERING JUDAS

BRAGGIONI sits heaped upon the edge of a straight-backed chair much too small for him, and sings to Laura in a furry, mournful voice. Laura has begun to find reasons for avoiding her own house until the latest possible moment, for Braggioni is there almost every night. No matter how late she is, he will be sitting there with a surly, waiting expression, pulling at his kinky yellow hair, thumbing the strings of his guitar, snarling a tune under his breath. Lupe the Indian maid meets Laura at the door, and says with the flicker of a glance towards the upper room, "He waits."

Laura wishes to lie down, she is tired of her hairpins and the feel of her long tight sleeves, but she says to him, "Have you a new song for me this evening?" If he says yes, she asks him to sing it. If he says no, she remembers his favorite one, and asks him to sing it again. Lupe brings her a cup of chocolate and a plate of rice, and Laura eats at the small table under the lamp, first inviting Braggioni, whose answer is always the same: "I have eaten, and besides, chocolate thickens the voice."

Laura says, "Sing, then," and Braggioni heaves himself into song. He scratches the guitar familiarly as though it were a pet animal, and sings passionately off key, taking the high notes in a prolonged painful squeal. Laura, who haunts the markets listening to the ballad singers, and stops every day to hear the blind boy playing his reed-flute in Sixteenth of September Street, listens to Braggioni with pitiless courtesy, because she dares not smile at his miserable per-

formance. Nobody dares to smile at him. Braggioni is cruel to every one, with a kind of specialized insolence, but he is so vain of his talents, and so sensitive to slights, it would require a cruelty and vanity greater than his own to lay a finger on the vast cureless wound of his self-esteem. It would require courage, too, for it is dangerous to offend him, and nobody has this courage.

Braggioni loves himself with such tenderness and amplitude and eternal charity that his followers — for he is a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist, and his skin has been punctured in honorable warfare — warm themselves in the reflected glow, and say to each other: "He has a real nobility, a love of humanity raised above mere personal affections." The excess of this self-love has flowed out, inconveniently for her, over Laura, who with so many others, owes her comfortable situation and her salary to him. When he is in a very good humor, he tells her, "I am tempted to forgive you for being a *gringa. Gringita!*" and Laura, burning, imagines herself leaning forward suddenly, and with a sound back-handed slap wiping the suety smile from his face. If he notices her eyes at these moments he gives no sign.

She knows what Braggioni would offer her, and she must resist tenaciously without appearing to resist, and if she could avoid it she would not admit even to herself the slow drift of his intention. During these long evenings which have spoiled a long month for her, she sits in her deep chair with an open book on her knees, resting her eyes on the consoling rigidity of the printed page when the sight and sound of Braggioni singing threaten to identify themselves with all her remembered afflictions and to add their weight to her uneasy premonitions of the future. The gluttonous bulk of Braggioni has become a symbol of her many disillusions, for a revolu-

tionist should be lean, animated by heroic faith, a vessel of abstract virtues. This is nonsense, she knows it now and is ashamed of it. Revolution must have leaders, and leadership is a career for energetic men. She is, her comrades tell her, full of romantic error, for what she defines as cynicism in them is merely "a developed sense of reality." She is almost too willing to say, "I am wrong, I suppose I don't really understand the principles," and afterward she makes a secret truce with herself, determined not to surrender her will to such expedient logic. But she cannot help feeling that she has been betrayed irreparably by the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be, and at times she is almost contented to rest in this sense of grievance as a private store of consolation. Sometimes she wishes to run away, but she stays. Now she longs to fly out of this room, down the narrow stairs, and into the street where the houses lean together like conspirators under a single mottled lamp, and leave Braggioni singing to himself.

Instead she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior. Her knees cling together under sound blue serge, and her round white collar is not purposely nun-like. She wears the uniform of an idea, and has renounced vanities. She was born Roman Catholic, and in spite of her fear of being seen by someone who might make a scandal of it, she slips now and again into some crumbling little church, kneels on the chilly stone, and says a Hail Mary on the gold rosary she bought in Tehuantepec. It is no good and she ends by examining the altar with its tinsel flowers and ragged brocades, and feels tender about the battered doll-shape of some male saint whose white, lace-trimmed drawers hang limply around his ankles below the hieratic dignity of his velvet robe. She has encased herself in

a set of principles derived from her early training, leaving no detail of gesture or of personal taste untouched, and for this reason she will not wear lace made on machines. This is her private heresy, for in her special group the machine is sacred, and will be the salvation of the workers. She loves fine lace, and there is a tiny edge of fluted cobweb on this collar, which is one of twenty precisely alike, folded in blue tissue paper in the upper drawer of her clothes chest.

Braggioni catches her glance solidly as if he had been waiting for it, leans forward, balancing his paunch between his spread knees, and sings with tremendous emphasis, weighing his words. He has, the song relates, no father and no mother, nor even a friend to console him; lonely as a wave of the sea he comes and goes, lonely as a wave. His mouth opens round and yearns sideways, his balloon cheeks grow oily with the labor of song. He bulges marvellously in his expensive garments. Over his lavendar collar, crushed upon a purple necktie, held by a diamond hoop: over his ammunition belt of tooled leather worked in silver, buckled cruelly around his gasping middle: over the tops of his glossy yellow shoes Braggioni swells with ominous ripeness, his mauve silk hose stretched taut, his ankles bound with the stout leather thongs of his shoes.

When he stretches his eyelids at Laura she notes again that his eyes are the true tawny yellow cat's eyes. He is rich, not in money, he tells her, but in power, and this power brings with it the blameless ownership of things, and the right to indulge his love of small luxuries. "I have a taste for the elegant refinements," he said once, flourishing a yellow silk handkerchief before her nose; "Smell that? It is Jockey Club, imported from New York." Nonetheless he is wounded by life. He will say so presently. "It is true everything turns to

dust in the hand, to gall on the tongue." He sighs and his leather belt creaks like a saddle girth. "I am disappointed in everything as it comes. Everything." He shakes his head. "You, poor thing, you will be disappointed too. You are born for it. We are more alike than you realize in some things. Wait and see. Some day you will remember what I have told you, you will know that Braggioni was your friend."

Laura feels a slow chill, a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience. She has translated this fear into something homely, immediate, and sometimes hesitates before crossing the street. "My personal fate is nothing, except as the testimony of a mental attitude," she reminds herself, quoting from some forgotten philosophic primer, and is sensible enough to add, "Anyhow, I shall not be killed by an automobile if I can help it."

"It may be true I am as corrupt, in another way, as Braggioni," she thinks in spite of herself, "as callous, as incomplete," and if this is so, any kind of death seems preferable. Still she sits quietly, she does not run. Where could she go? Uninvited she has promised herself to this place; she can no longer imagine herself as living in another country, and there is no pleasure in remembering her life before she came here.

Precisely what is the nature of this devotion, its true motives, and what are its obligations? Laura cannot say. She spends part of her days in Xochimilco, nearby, teaching Indian children to say in English, "The cat is on the mat." When she appears in the class room they crowd about her with smiles on their wise, innocent clay-colored faces, crying, "Good morning, my titcher!" in immaculate voices, and they make of her desk a fresh garden of flowers every day.

During her leisure she goes to union meetings and listens

to busy important voices quarrelling over tactics, methods, internal politics. She visits the prisoners of her own political faith in their cells, where they entertain themselves with counting cockroaches, repenting of their indiscretions, composing their memoirs, writing out manifestoes and plans for their comrades who are still walking about free, hands in pockets, sniffing fresh air. Laura brings them food and cigarettes and a little money, and she brings messages disguised in equivocal phrases from the men outside who dare not set foot in the prison for fear of disappearing into the cells kept empty for them. If the prisoners confuse night and day, and complain, "Dear Little Laura, time doesn't pass in this infernal hole, and I won't know when it is time to sleep unless I have a reminder," she brings them their favorite narcotics, and says in a tone that does not wound them with pity, "Tonight will really be night for you," and though her Spanish amuses them, they find her comforting, useful. If they lose patience and all faith, and curse the slowness of their friends in coming to their rescue with money and influence, they trust her not to repeat everything, and if she inquires, "Where do you think we can find money, or influence?" they are certain to answer, "Well, there is Braggioni, why doesn't he do something?"

She smuggles letters from headquarters to men hiding from firing squads in back streets in mildewed houses, where they sit in tumbled beds and talk bitterly as if all Mexico were at their heels, when Laura knows positively they might appear at the band concert in the Alameda on Sunday morning, and no one would notice them. But Braggioni says, "Let them sweat a little. The next time they may be careful. It is very restful to have them out of the way for a while." She is not afraid to knock on any door in any street after midnight, and

enter in the darkness, and say to one of these men who is really in danger: "They will be looking for you — seriously — tomorrow morning after six. Here is some money from Vicente. Go to Vera Cruz and wait."

She borrows money from the Roumanian agitator to give to his bitter enemy the Polish agitator. The favor of Braggioni is their disputed territory, and Braggioni holds the balance nicely, for he can use them both. The Polish agitator talks love to her over café tables, hoping to exploit what he believes is her secret sentimental preference for him, and he gives her misinformation which he begs her to repeat as the solemn truth to certain persons. The Roumanian is more adroit. He is generous with his money in all good causes, and lies to her with an air of ingenuous candor, as if he were her good friend and confident. She never repeats anything they may say. Braggioni never asks questions. He has other ways to discover all that he wishes to know about them.

Nobody touches her, but all praise her grey eyes, and the soft, round under lip which promises gayety, yet is always grave, nearly always firmly closed: and they cannot understand why she is in Mexico. She walks back and forth on her errands, with puzzled eyebrows, carrying her little folder of drawings and music and school papers. No dancer dances more beautifully than Laura walks, and she inspires some amusing, unexpected ardors, which cause little gossip, because nothing comes of them. A young captain who had been a soldier in Zapata's army attempted, during a horseback ride near Cuernavaca, to express his desire for her with the noble simplicity befitting a rude folk-hero: but gently, because he was gentle. This gentleness was his defeat, for when he alighted, and removed her foot from the stirrup, and essayed to draw her down into his arms, her horse, ordinarily a tame

one, shied fiercely, reared and plunged away. The young hero's horse careered blindly after his stable-mate, and the hero did not return to the hotel until rather late that evening. At breakfast he came to her table in full charro dress, grey buckskin jacket and trousers with strings of silver buttons down the leg, and he was in a humorous, careless mood. "May I sit with you?" and "You are a wonderful rider. I was terrified that you might be thrown and dragged. I should never have forgiven myself. But I cannot admire you enough for your riding!"

"I learned to ride in Arizona," said Laura.

"If you will ride with me again this morning, I promise you a horse that will not shy with you," he said. But Laura remembered that she must return to Mexico City at noon.

Next morning the children made a celebration and spent their playtime writing on the blackboard, "We lov ar ticher," and with tinted chalks they drew wreaths of flowers around the words. The young hero wrote her a letter: "I am a very foolish, wasteful, impulsive man. I should have first said I love you, and then you would not have run away. But you shall see me again." Laura thought, "I must send him a box of colored crayons," but she was trying to forgive herself for having spurred her horse at the wrong moment.

A brown, shock-haired youth came and stood in her patio one night and sang like a lost soul for two hours, but Laura could think of nothing to do about it. The moonlight spread a wash of gauzy silver over the clear spaces of the garden, and the shadows were cobalt blue. The scarlet blossoms of the judas tree were dull purple, and the names of the colors repeated themselves automatically in her mind, while she watched, not the boy, but his shadow, fallen like a dark garment across the fountain rim, trailing in the water. Lupe

came silently and whispered expert counsel in her ear: "If you will throw him one little flower, he will sing another song or two and go away." Laura threw the flower, and he sang a last song and went away with the flower tucked in the band of his hat. Lupe said, "He is one of the organizers of the Typographers Union, and before that he sold corridas in the Merced market, and before that, he came from Guanajuato, where I was born. I would not trust any man, but I trust least those from Guanajuato."

She did not tell Laura that he would be back again the next night, and the next, nor that he would follow her at a certain fixed distance around the Merced market, through the Zocolo, up Francisco I. Madero Avenue, and so along the Paseo de la Reforma to Chapultepec Park, and into the Philosopher's Footpath, still with that flower withering in his hat, and an indivisible attention in his eyes.

Now Laura is accustomed to him, it means nothing except that he is nineteen years old and is observing a convention with all propriety, as though it were founded on a law of nature, which in the end it might well prove to be. He is beginning to write poems which he prints on a wooden press, and he leaves them stuck like handbills in her door. She is pleasantly disturbed by the abstract, unhurried watchfulness of his black eyes which will in time turn easily towards another object. She tells herself that throwing the flower was a mistake, for she is twenty-two years old and knows better; but she refuses to regret it, and persuades herself that her negation of all external events as they occur is a sign that she is gradually perfecting herself in the stoicism she strives to cultivate against that disaster she fears, though she cannot name it.

She is not at home in the world. Every day she teaches chil-

dren who remain strangers to her, though she loves their tender round hands and their charming opportunist savagery. She knocks at unfamiliar doors not knowing whether a friend or a stranger shall answer, and even if a known face emerges from the sour gloom of that unknown interior, still it is the face of a stranger. No matter what this stranger says to her, nor what her message to him, the very cells of her flesh reject knowledge and kinship in one monotonous word. No. No. No. She draws her strength from this one holy talismanic word which does not suffer her to be led into evil. Denying everything, she may walk anywhere in safety, she looks at everything without amazement.

No, repeats this firm unchanging voice of her blood; and she looks at Braggioni without amazement. He is a great man, he wishes to impress this simple girl who covers her great round breasts with thick dark cloth, and who hides long, invaluably beautiful legs under a heavy skirt. She is almost thin except for the incomprehensible fullness of her breasts, like a nursing mother's, and Braggioni, who considers himself a judge of women, speculates again on the puzzle of her notorious virginity, and takes the liberty of speech which she permits without a sign of modesty, indeed, without any sort of sign, which is disconcerting.

"You think you are so cold, gringita! Wait and see. You will surprise yourself some day! May I be there to advise you!" He stretches his eyelids at her, and his ill-humored cat's eyes waver in a separate glance for the two points of light marking the opposite ends of a smoothly drawn path between the swollen curve of her breasts. He is not put off by that blue serge, nor by her resolutely fixed gaze. There is all the time in the world. His cheeks are bellying with the wind of song. "O girl with the dark eyes," he sings, and re-

considers. "But yours are not dark. I can change all that. O girl with the green eyes, you have stolen my heart away!" Then his mind wanders to the song, and Laura feels the weight of his attention being shifted elsewhere. Singing thus, he seems harmless, he is quite harmless, there is nothing to do but sit patiently and say "No," when the moment comes. She draws a full breath, and her mind wanders, too, but not far. She dares not wander too far.

Not for nothing has Braggioni taken pains to be a good revolutionist and a professional lover of humanity. He will never die of it. He has the malice, the cleverness, the wickedness, the sharpness of wit, the hardness of heart, stipulated for loving the world profitably. *He will never die of it.* He will live to see himself kicked out from his feeding trough by other hungry world-saviours. Traditionally he must sing in spite of his life which drives him to bloodshed, he tells Laura, for his father was a Tuscany peasant who drifted to Yucatan and married a Maya woman: a woman of race, an aristocrat. They gave him the love and knowledge of music, thus: and under the rip of his thumbnail, the strings of the instrument complain like exposed nerves.

Once he was called Delgadito by all the girls and married women who ran after him; he was so scrawny all his bones showed under his thin cotton clothing, and he could squeeze his emptiness to the very backbone with his two hands. He was a poet and the revolution was only a dream then; too many women loved him and sapped away his youth, and he could never find enough to eat anywhere, anywhere! Now he is a leader of men, crafty men who whisper in his ear, hungry men who wait for hours outside his office for a word with him, emaciated men with wild faces who waylay him at the street gate with a timid, "Comrade, let me tell you . . ." and they

blow the foul breath from their empty stomachs in his face.

He is always sympathetic. He gives them handfuls of small coins from his own pocket, he promises them work, there will be demonstrations, they must join the unions and attend the meetings, above all they must be on the watch for spies. They are closer to him than his own brothers, without them he can do nothing — until tomorrow, comrade!

Until tomorrow. "They are stupid, they are lazy, they are treacherous, they would cut my throat for nothing," he says to Laura. He has good food and abundant drink, he hires an automobile and drives in the Paseo on Sunday morning, and enjoys plenty of sleep in a soft bed beside a wife who dares not disturb him; and he sits pampering his bones in easy billows of fat, singing to Laura, who knows and thinks these things about him. When he was fifteen, he tried to drown himself because he loved a girl, his first love, and she laughed at him. "A thousand women have paid for that," and his tight little mouth turns down at the corners. Now he perfumes his hair with Jockey Club, and confides to Laura: "One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark. I prefer them all."

His wife organizes unions among the girls in the cigarette factories, and walks in picket lines, and even speaks at meetings in the evening. But she cannot be brought to acknowledge the benefits of true liberty. "I tell her I must have my freedom, net. She does not understand my point of view." Laura has heard this many times. Braggioni scratches the guitar and meditates. "She is an instinctively virtuous woman, pure gold, no doubt of that. If she were not, I should lock her up, and she knows it."

His wife, who works so hard for the good of the factory girls, employs part of her leisure lying on the floor weeping

because there are so many women in the world, and only one husband for her, and she never knows where nor when to look for him. He told her: "Unless you can learn to cry only when I am not here, I must go away for good." That day he went away and took a room at the Hotel Madrid.

It is this month of separation for the sake of higher principles that has been spoiled not only for Mrs. Braggioni, whose sense of reality is beyond criticism, but for Laura who feels herself bogged in a nightmare. Tonight Laura envies Mrs. Braggioni, who is alone, and free to weep as much as she pleases about a concrete wrong. Laura has just come from a visit to the prison, and she is waiting for tomorrow with a bitter anxiety as if tomorrow may not come, but time may be caught immovably in this hour, with herself transfixed, Braggioni singing on forever, and Eugenio's body not yet discovered by the guard.

Braggioni says: "Are you going to sleep?" Almost before she can shake her head, he begins telling her about the May-day disturbances coming on in Morelia, for the Catholics hold a festival in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Socialists celebrate their martyrs on that day. "There will be two independent processions, starting from either end of town, and they will march until they meet, and the rest depends . . ." He asks her to oil and load his pistols. Standing up, he unbuckles his ammunition belt, and spreads it laden across her knees. Laura sits with the shells slipping through the cleaning cloth dipped in oil, and he says again he cannot understand why she works so hard for the revolutionary idea unless she loves some man who is in it. "Are you not in love with some one?" "No," says Laura. "And no one is in love with you?" "No." "Then it is your own fault. No woman need go begging. Why, what is the matter with you? The legless beggar

woman in the Alameda has a perfectly faithful lover. Did you know that?"

Laura peers down the pistol barrel and says nothing, but a long, slow faintness rises and subsides in her; Braggioni curves his swollen fingers around the throat of the guitar and softly smothers the music out of it, and when she hears him again he seems to have forgotten her, and is speaking in the hypnotic voice he uses when talking in small rooms to a listening, close-gathered crowd. Some day this world, now seemingly so composed and eternal, to the edges of every sea shall be merely a tangle of gaping trenches, of crashing walls and broken bodies. Everything must be torn from its accustomed place where it has rotted for centuries, hurled skyward and distributed, cast down again clean as rain, without separate identity. Nothing shall survive that the stiffened hands of poverty have created for the rich and no one shall be left alive except the elect spirits destined to procreate a new world cleansed of cruelty and injustice, ruled by benevolent anarchy: "Pistols are good, I love them, cannon are even better, but in the end I pin my faith to good dynamite," he concludes, and strokes the pistol lying in her hands. "Once I dreamed of destroying this city, in case it offered resistance to General Ortiz, but it fell into his hands like an over-ripe pear."

He is made restless by his own words, rises and stands waiting. Laura holds up the belt to him: "Put that on, and go kill somebody in Morelia, and you will be happier," she says softly. The presence of death in the room makes her bold. "Today, I found Eugenio going into a stupor. He refused to allow me to call the prison doctor. He had taken all the tablets I brought him yesterday. He said he took them because he was bored."

"He is a fool, and his death is his own business," says Braggioni, fastening his belt carefully.

"I told him if he had waited only a little while longer, you would have got him set free," says Laura. "He said he did not want to wait."

"He is a fool and we are well rid of him," says Braggioni, reaching for his hat.

He goes away. Laura knows his mood has changed, she will not see him any more for a while. He will send word when he needs her to go on errands into strange streets, to speak to the strange faces that will appear, like clay masks with the power of human speech, to mutter their thanks to Braggioni for his help. Now she is free, and she thinks, I must run while there is time. But she does not go.

Braggioni enters his own house where for a month his wife has spent many hours every night weeping and tangling her hair upon her pillow. She is weeping now, and she weeps more at the sight of him, the cause of all her sorrows. He looks about the room. Nothing is changed, the smells are good and familiar, he is well acquainted with the woman who comes toward him with no reproach except grief in her face. He says to her tenderly: "You are so good, please do not cry any more, you dear good creature." She says, "Are you tired, my angel? Sit here and I will wash your feet." She brings a bowl of water, and kneeling, unlaces his shoes, and when from her knees she raises her sad eyes under her blackened lids, he is sorry for everything, and bursts into tears. "Ah, yes, I am hungry, I am tired, let us eat something together," he says, between sobs. His wife leans her head on his arm and says, "Forgive me!" and this time he is refreshed by the solemn, endless rain of her tears.

Laura takes off her serge dress and puts on a white linen nightgown and goes to bed. She turns her head a little to one side, and lying still, reminds herself that it is time to sleep. Numbers tick in her brain like little clocks, soundless doors

close of themselves around her. If you would sleep, you must not remember anything, the children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor. 1-2-3-4-5 — it is monstrous to confuse love with revolution, night with day, life with death — ah, Eugenio!

The tolling of the midnight bell is a signal, but what does it mean? Get up, Laura, and follow me: come out of your sleep, out of your bed, out of this strange house. What are you doing in this house? Without a word, without fear she rose and reached for Eugenio's hand, but he eluded her with a sharp, sly smile and drifted away. This is not all, there is more — Murderer, he said, follow me, I will show you a new country, but it is far away and we must hurry. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand, no; and she clung first to the stair rail, and then to the topmost branch of the judas tree that bent down slowly and set her upon the earth, and then to the rocky ledge of a cliff, and then to the jagged wave of a sea that was not water but a desert of crumbling stone. Where are you taking me, she asked in wonder but without fear. To death, and it is a long way off, and we must hurry, said Eugenio. No, said Laura, not unless you take my hand. Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity, take and eat: and from the judas tree he stripped the warm bleeding flowers, and held them to her lips. She saw that his hand was fleshless, a cluster of small white petrified branches, and his eye sockets were without light, but she ate the flowers greedily for they satisfied both hunger and thirst. Murderer! said Eugenio, and Cannibal! This is my body and my blood. Laura cried No! and at the sound of her own voice, she awoke trembling, and was afraid to sleep again.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

AMBERGRIS

This body, tapped of every drop of breath,
In vast corruption of its swollen pride,
Is perfected to be the whale of death;
Yet, I believe, the hand that plumbs its side
Will gather dissolution's sweet increase,
Exquisite fern of death — in nature, ambergris.

Meanwhile, thinking of love, I have been dressed
For such destruction. Though it surely break,
Come pluck the deep wild kernel of my breast,
That wafer of devotion, and partake
Of its compacted sweetness, till it bring
The soul to rise upon the fleshly wing.

If gentle hearts are scorned, in scorn of it
I shall immerse it in such bitterness,
Bathe every pulse in such an acid wit,
That from my mammoth, cold, and featureless
Event of age, my enemies will flee,
Whereas my friends will stay and pillage me.

STANLEY J. KUNITZ

HENRY ADAMS

A CRITICISM IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Preface

THESE chapters on the writings of Henry Adams illustrate two actuating forces of his nature. Let this nature, by conceit, take on the aspect of moving waters: deep feeling and poetic intellect is its one continual undertow, and detached mind the strong surface current in the contrary direction. As this seems the developing action of a lifetime, a complete and chronologically arranged edition of Adams' works can be of the greatest value for its description. No such edition exists, not even of the letters of which quite a number grace the biographies of Adams' friends. For the rest, works that he published in the seventies and eighties, and even the "Life of George Cabot Lodge," which appeared as late as 1911, are now out of print and forgotten.

In view of this, no adoration of scholarship could prompt, in the present instance, an unnecessary officiousness. The unpublished papers of Henry Adams, of which there must be enough to interest the sensitive and the intelligent, have not been sought out. Not so those once published anonymously and under a pseudonym.

The editor of the *North American*, asked whether any of the unsigned reviews in the old numbers of his magazine had been written by Adams, cordially submitted a list of about twenty-five, all considerable in length. The obscure shadow

of Adams' book reviews of the eighties might well be the sunshine of our magazine articles.

The librarian of Harvard also sent photostats of a suppressed review of Taylor's *Faust* bearing this note in Adams' handwriting:

"This notice, written originally by a strong admirer of Mr. Taylor, but much changed by me in tone, led to a protest from the author, and a request from Mr. Osgood that the notice should be suppressed. Which was done.

Henry Adams."

One might have gone further. One might have asked for photostats of Henry Adams' Class Oration of 1858, of his efforts in old Harvard College magazines, of his articles for the press. But bones and a death's-head are not to be resurrected, even if they remain. Adams, who was reserved, knew how to warn people. In 1908 he wrote to one of his nieces:

"You must not read what you call your book (the "Education"), because the Chartres is good enough for you, and me too, and the pigs all about."

May 7, 1924

Introduction

THERE is a fine reason for not writing about Henry Adams. His personal quality forbids it. Yet fine people are studied, and personal quality excites antagonism. The fact is, very little about Adams has been written, outside of a few sincere and understanding pages of several scholars and friends who worked with him. Queer spurts of captious criticism have appeared under the names of Housatonic (pseud.), Baldensperger, Bruce, Shafer, Sheldon. Idealism has come, warm, from Goucher College to prod a cold Bostonian to life. The absolute has spoken through Mr. Bradford and Mr. More.

Even Brooks Adams found himself concerned more with his grandfather, John Quincy, rather than with his brother — though his original intention was quite different. The very practical, yet interesting, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., who, as a boy, boxed Henry's ear wrote to him in this manner:

"You set up for a philosopher. You write letters à la Horace Walpole; you talk of loafing round Europe; you pretend to have seen life. Such twaddle makes me feel like a giant Warrington talking to an infant Pendennis. *You* 'tired of this life'! *You* more and more 'callous and indifferent about your own fortunes!' . . . You are beaten back everywhere before you are twenty-four, and finally writing philosophical letters you grumble at the strange madness of the times and haven't faith in God and the spirit of your age. What do you mean by thinking, much less writing such stuff? . . . How am I throwing myself away? Isn't a century's work of my ancestors worth a struggle to preserve? . . . Come — no more of this. Don't get into this vein again, or if you do, keep it to yourself. We shall come out all right and if we don't the world will. Excuse me if I have been rough, but it will do you good . . ."

Henry must have smiled and seen no need for excuses. He was taught, more or less, to expect this of brothers. He would have smiled to see Mr. Bradford quote an excellent tirade to show Charles Francis agreeing with Mr. Bradford. To treat Henry Adams as essentially a member of a family is as critical as saying of Wordsworth's poetry — he composed it mumbling to Dorothy.

Henry Adams' critics have accused him of desiccated thinking and of not doing anything. More than anything else they have deplored his lack of seriousness. They have found him suffering from moral debility. Before God and garrulous Trojans who once passed the half-century mark the Savonarola of Washington, D. C., stands wanting.

"His account of himself is so amusing," winks Mr. Samuel

McChord Crothers through an entire article in the *Yale Review*; and, commenting on Adams' evasion of fighting political bosses who kick with the spirit of bronchos, he ventures: "It never occurred to Theodore Roosevelt to get out of the way of either."

Mr. William Cabell Bruce, the most voluminous among John Randolph biographers, says in effect: Henry Adams was a disappointed presidential candidate, a useless academician, a snake in the grass. His "Education" and the "John Randolph" are sufficient evidence. If it is doubtful that the "Harvard professor" was wrong about John Randolph, read Whittier's encomium:

"Bard, Sage, and Tribune! in himself
All moods of mind contrasting,
The tenderest wail of human woe
The scorn like lightning blasting;
The pathos which from rival eyes
Unwilling tears could summon,
The stinging taunt, the fiery burst
Of hatred scarcely human!"

While these rhetorical spangles may be shed and Whittier still remains delectable for an old man with a singing voice, the temper of Cabell Bruce is not quite as congenial. A little fun might be had over such assonance as "summon" and "human"; there is no fun in a defence of, for example, "Roony" Lee set over against Henry Adams. When Fortinbras and Hamlet meet, Hamlet wishes him all that is his properly, but does well to remain quite dead. Henry Adams wrote of "Roony" — "No one knew enough to know how ignorant he was" — and Mr. Bruce probably never will understand an attitude which is always ready to go one step

further: No one knows enough to know how ignorant anyone is.

Enter Mr. Paul Elmer More: precisely, that's the trouble with Mr. Adams; he is, what might conveniently be called, a sentimental nihilist. "Our latest Puritan rediscovered woman on her mediaeval throne and chants to her in modern speech the ancient paean to Alma Venus Genetrix. It would be a petty business (why?) to unravel the various motives that had impelled him on the devious way from the sturdy, if unloving protestantism of his race. He himself makes much of the motive of love as the aspect of infinite power which man can understand. . . . Was it the perfect irresponsibility of the Virgin, human no doubt, feminine perhaps, certainly not Puritan, that gave to our tired sceptic the illusion of having reached a comfortable goal after his long voyage of education? There is a fateful analogy between the irresponsibility of unreasoning Force and unreasoning love; and the Gods of Nietzsche and of Tolstoy are but the two faces of one god. To change the metaphor, if it may be done without disrespect, the image in the Cathedral of Chartres looks perilously like the ancient idol of Dinos decked out in petticoats."

Evidently, as late as the eleventh volume of his Shelbourne Essays, Mr. More is still afraid of petticoats. "In the Virgin," continues Mr. More, "Adams saw one symbol of Force comprehensible to the human heart, if not to the human brain." But positives and negatives have little to do with Adams' insight, and the heart and brain of it never make a dichotomy. The Virgin may be Dinos decked out in women's clothes; she may be irresponsible, illogical, feminine; but if she is an infinite number of things, she is fundamentally one. To Adams, her love was the beginning and the attainment. The fact of fertility and birth was the basis for religious fact. In line and

form her love, to Adams, may have had the ideal thinness of a Beatrice, but a Vita Nuova in the thinnest sense it was not.

Like Spinoza, Henry Adams found nature not perfectly safe. To both, this was no fault in nature. For practical ethics, Spinoza turned to love substance which never loved in return. Adams, a more conscious aesthetician, little germane to Job or to the humility of a Jewish lens-grinder, turned to the Virgin.

This is the sentimental nihilism Mr. More refers to. For some reason it does not follow that men are born of mothers. Mr. More who is bravely, sensitively, sensibly human forgets that he is also natural.

Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, who quotes Mary Lyon and Christ, forgets nothing of the kind. For does he not quote Meilhac and Halevy as well: "Le moraliste s'en afflige—il s'en afflige, le moraliste: mais c'est tout de meme comme ça." A Greek would have said, one who recognizes virtue is virtuous. Mr. Gamaliel Bradford is not a Greek. His essay is decidedly named an American Portrait.

For some reason, probably unknown to himself, Mr. Bradford reads Henry Adams to find Mr. Bradford. Does he meet with silence, he calls it wilful indifference. Is there an attempt, on the part of Adams, at elucidation, Mr. Bradford is ready to brand it as amused curiosity. His subject avoids fanaticism, and the judgment of the critic is, Adams lived in a religious void. Adams suffers unbearably, but Mr. Bradford is inclined to believe his subject's grief is "largely rhetorical: So long as ignorance enables him to gild a phrase or turn an epigram, he can forgive it."

"What shall be said of a man who in recounting his own life up to thirty, makes no single mention of having his pulses stirred, of being hurled out of himself by nature, or love, or

poetry, or God?" . . . "The poetry of the world might never have existed for all the account his education takes of it." These, among other things, are said of one who wrote: "As Adams sat there, numbers of people came, for the figure seemed to have become a tourist fashion, and all wanted to know its meaning. Most took it for a portrait-statue, and the remnant were vacant-minded in the absence of a personal guide. None felt what would have been a nursery-instinct to a Hindu baby or a Japanese jinricksha-runner. The only exceptions were the clergy, who taught a lesson even deeper. One after another brought companions there, and, apparently fascinated by their own reflection, broke out passionately against the expression they felt in the figure of despair, of atheism, of denial. Like the others, the priest saw only what he brought. Like all great artists, St. Gaudens held up the mirror and no more. The American laymen had lost sight of ideals; the American priest had lost sight of faith. Both were more American than the old, half-witted soldiers who denounced the wasting, on a mere grave, of money which should have been given for drink."

But for education, Adams "had no complaint to make against man or woman. They had all treated him kindly; he had never met with ill-will, ill-temper, or even ill-manners, or known a quarrel." Remembering these, his own, words and the occasional nephews he adopts as kin in his preface to "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres," still another one, at best belated, hurries to put an end to all eristics.

May 7, 1929

NOTE: The chronological method of this essay, as contrasted with other methods readers might prefer, i.e., Henry Adams on Unity and Multiplicity, on History, on Literature and Education, etc., etc., seeks justification in the fact that Adams' development as a writer reflects the process of education as he saw it in his autobiography.

The autobiographical matter of *The Education* has, therefore, been quoted thruout to offset the works as situations in "the process."

For the same reason, the autobiographical contents of *The Education* has not been used in the comment devoted to the book itself (see Chapter IX of this essay) except to make clear its relation to the "Mont Saint Michel and Chartres." These two works are so interrelated that an analysis of them, reflecting Adams' particular problem of education at the time he wrote them necessitated a combined handling of their themes, rather than a summary of their individual contents. Such a summary of the "Mont St. Michel" has been added as appendix for the reader who cares to turn to it. The contents of *The Education*, however, remains explained (but for a brief note) by the quotations from it, which are more than half this essay.

For the rest, these quotations assume that Adams' attainment or non-attainment to power (clarity as to the futility of education and as to the meaning of "something else") matters a great deal in relation to the treatment, which, as a writer, he gave these things.

The tragedy of his resignation grew with his literary accomplishment: but he was a writer from the beginning; bestowing on each of his problems detachment and imagination despite the void each problem left as he moved on from it. Detachment and imagination increased always with the growth in force and objectivity of his subject.

If, therefore, the reader will miss a criticism (implicit) of the quotations in this essay, he will perhaps excuse it on the ground that the matter checked obviousness.

August 14, 1929

Chapter I

Twenty (1860-65)

HENRY ADAMS lived long and wrote well. He began, when he was ten, by reading proof of his great-grandfather's *Works*. Whether the boy, plying his task at the biddance of his father, was led astray by the anti-slavery politics of four mature gentlemen, busy with him in the same room, can perhaps never be known. The merit of the boy's literary venture was an exception to the approaching rule. "In after years his father sometimes complained that, as a reader of Novanglus and Massachusettensis, Henry had shown very little consciousness of punctuation."

"His brothers were the type; he was the variation." The boy felt this instinctively. Detachment and the poet's receptivity for torment were part of him from the beginning. If Henry Adams had looked back and seen each incident in his life a parable of the Son forsaking the Mother to go about his Father's business, as in his "Prayer to the Virgin," he might have dwelt with less detachment than he did on his grandfather's act of leading the boy to school in spite of his desires.

The boy's body was a matter of sensitivity as all bodies are; his mind showed a lineage of worthies. It slaved over the works of John Adams because an Adams was his father and he, too, was an Adams. The tragedy was, here was a child, possessing the moral sensitivity of his fathers, and, no doubt, more serious than they; yet a child, whose clearness was not always in the possession of his moral sense, but in his enjoyments, his antics, his curiosity, his love of Scott, peaches and pears.

Yet the tragedy may be exaggerated. The boy's mind may have been led to school in tears, but the tears may have dried while the boy considered how funny the mind of his grandfather was. "On the whole," wrote Adams, "he learnt most then." The early life was happy. Any prosaic soul, like the boy's father, could have declaimed with tremulous voice Wordsworth's "Thou little Child — " over Henry, who might have heard and not felt profound melancholy or price, or even Henry Adams.

The boy went to Harvard when he was sixteen. "He took to the pen. He wrote. The College Magazine printed his work, and the College Societies listened to his addresses. Lavish of praise, the readers were not; the audiences, too, listened in silence; but this was all the encouragement any Harvard collegian had a reasonable hope to receive; grave silence was a

form of patience that meant possible future acceptance; and Henry Adams went on writing.

"No one cared enough to criticize, except himself who soon began to suffer from reaching his own limits. He found that he could not be this — or that — or the other; always precisely the things he wanted to be. He had not wit or scope or force. Judges always ranked him beneath a rival, if he had any; and he believed the judges were right. His work seemed to him thin, commonplace, feeble. At times he felt his own weakness so fatally that he could not go on; when he had nothing to say, he could not say it, and he found that he had very little to say at best. Much that he then wrote must be still in existence in print or manuscript, though he never cared to see it again; for he felt no doubt that it was in reality just what he thought it. At best it showed only a feeling for form; an instinct of exclusion. Nothing shocked — not even its weakness."[1]

Adams was timid, and timidity often breaks into astonishing temerity. His Class Oration of 1858 was delivered with perfect self-possession. Whatever detachment Adams then possessed must have appeared in his speech and in his delivery; whatever poetry he had must have been plain in his features to those who cared to see it, if any did. A photograph taken at this time remains. The face is too young for lines. But the boy is, twenty, revealed in the lips and eyes.

Henry had a high, straight forehead, as well, though education had not begun. He was human and wanted to go to Europe. In Germany, Lowell had taught him, there was scholarship; in Germany, Adams believed, young men learned Civil Law. In Thüringen "his three companions — John Bancroft, James J. Higginson, and B. W. Crowninshield, all

[1] *The Education*, p. 66. (See p. 2.)

Boston and Harvard College like himself, were satisfied with what they had seen, and when they sat down to rest on the spot where Goethe had written —

'Warte nur! balde
— Ruhest du auch!' —

the profoundness of the thought and the wisdom of the advice affected them so strongly that they hired a wagon and drove to Weimar the same night."[2] In Germany foreign students took notes. Adams left for Rome.

"Perhaps the most useful purpose he set himself to serve was that of his pen, for he wrote long letters, during the next three months, to his brother Charles, which his brother caused to be printed in the *Boston Courier*; and the exercise was good for him. He had little to say, and said it not very well, but that mattered less. The habit of expression leads to the search for something to express. Something remains as a residuum of the commonplace itself, if one strikes out every commonplace in the expression."[3]

"He went on to Naples, and there, in the hot June, heard rumors that Garibaldi and his thousand were about to attack Palermo. Calling on the American Minister, Chandler of Pennsylvania, he was kindly treated, not for his merit, but for his name, and Mr. Chandler amiably consented to send him to the seat of war as bearer of despatches to Captain Palmer of the American sloop of war *Iroquois*. Young Adams seized the chance, and went to Palermo in a government transport filled with fleas, commanded by a charming Prince Caracciolo.

"He told all about it to the *Boston Courier*, where the

[2] *The Education*, p. 82.

[3] *The Education*, p. 89.

narrative probably exists to this day, unless the files of the *Courier* have wholly perished."[4]

The files of the *Courier* are few. Of the seven letters of Adams to his brother Charles, the *American Historical Review* for January, 1920, reprinted those of July 10 and July 13, 1860. They show that Henry had no difficulty as a writer. He could be picturesque when he desired, and he desired to be frequently:

"I took a boat and landed. Numbers of men and boys, nearly all armed and looking very disreputable, were lounging and talking on the quay and round the Porta Felica. Here and there a red shirt showed itself. They make a very good uniform — rowdy but pugnacious; and now that Garibaldi has made them immortal, all young Sicily is putting them on, and swelling about in them almost as vulgarly, though more excusably, than New York firemen."

". . . we had a grand flea-hunt, for the beasts were all over us by dozens, and they were the biggest and hungriest specimens yet discovered. The *Illustrated News* correspondent, who was one of the party, is to make a sketch representing us dancing about and diving at each other's pantaloons. The officers' white duck showed the game beautifully, but our woolen ones only gave them shelter, and the consequence is that I am never free nor quiet, for my clothes bagged the most and concealed them the best."

He could express feeling that carried accents of restraint:

"It was curious to see that night, how people can sleep. At about midnight, after finishing supper and smoking, and while every one was looking up their berths, I went forward to see how the soldiers managed to get along. They were lying all

[4] *The Education*, p. 93.

over the deck, tumbled down anywhere, and all snoring like hogs. They lay so thick and it was so dark that I trod on three or four who were in the way, but they did not mind it, and when the engineer, who was passing, kicked them out of the passage, they dragged themselves a few inches on one side, with a groan, but never woke up."

He reflected on the humors of human nature, as a Fielding writing another *Journal of a Voyage* might have done:

"The next morning all was still, bright and clear. The poor soldiers' wives on deck looked very unhappy, and some, who had fine dark eyes, and pretty olive complexioned faces, looked so pale and patiently sad that they might have made beautiful studies for Magdalens and Madonnas. Certainly sea-sickness is one of the trials of life which bring us all down soonest to our common humanity; these women seemed absolutely refined by it, and their husbands and friends were as careful and gentle toward them as if they were all a set of refined and educated heroes and lovers."

Adams questioned early, in the manner of the "Education":

"And yet Heaven knows why he, of all men, has been selected for immortality. I, for one think that Cavour is much the greater man of the two; but practically the future Italy will probably adore Garibaldi's memory, and only respect Cavour's.

"As he (Garibaldi) sat there laughing and chattering and wagging his red gray beard, and puffing away at his cigar, it seemed to me that one might feel for him all the respect and admiration that his best friends ask, and yet at the same time enter a protest against fate."

Not many months passed before Henry Adams again wrote letters to his brother, Charles. As private secretary to his

father, to whom he referred as the "chief," and who was then ambassador to England, he observed British diplomacy, as he had observed Italian rebellion. The times were troubled ones for America; and news of the Union army in the States was not always assuring. Henry worried over the Declaration of Paris, and one thing or another, and London society was so monotonous at first that he longed for a commission and a chance to join Charles in the army. With time, however, he grew accustomed to his position, and, when opportunity offered, he wrote to Charles of other things than failure, British diplomacy and campaigns. He had really won his place in English society and seen Browning plain:

"Browning went on to get into a very unorthodox humor, and developed a spiritual election that would shock the Pope, I fear. According to him, the minds or the souls that really did develop themselves and educate themselves in life, could alone expect to enter a future career for which this life was a preparatory course. The rest were rejected, turned back, God knows what becomes of them, these myriads of savages and brutalized and degraded Christians. Only those that could pass the examination were allowed to commence the new career. This is Calvin's theory, modified; and really it seems not unlikely to me. Thus this earth may serve as a sort of feeder to the next world, as the lower and middle classes here do to the aristocracy, here and there furnishing a member to fill the gaps. The corollaries of this proposition are amusing to work out."[5]

Adams tried to work out many things. In the same year, 1863, he wrote:

"I write and read, and read and write. Two years ago I

[5] *A Cycle of Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 12.

began on history, our own time, I labored at financial theories, and branched out upon Political Economy and J. G. Mill. Mr. Mill's works, thoroughly studied, led me to the examination of philosophy and the great French thinkers of our own time; they in their turn passed me over to others whose very names are now known only as terms of reproach by the vulgar; the monarchist, Hobbes, the atheist Spinoza and so on. Where I shall end, dass weiss der liebe Gott! Probably my career will be brought up at the treadmill of the bar some day, for which, believe me, philosophy is as little adapted as war. Who will lead us back to the pleasant pastures and show us again the rich grain of the lawyer's office! Verily I say unto you, the time cometh and even now is when neither in these mountains nor in Jerusalem ye shall worship the idols of your childhood.

"Did you ever read Arthur Clough's Poems? The man that wrote that pastoral with the unpronounceable name, the Bothie of Toper-na-Vuolich. If you have not, I would like to send them to you. Young England, young Europe, of which I am by tastes and education a part; the young world, I believe, in every live country, are reflected in Clough's poems very clearly."[6]

However, youth had not yet broken with the child and was best reflected in his own words:

"The weeks dance away as merrily as ever they did in that dimly distant period when we were boys and you used to box my ears because your kite wouldn't fly and were the means of getting them boxed by disseminating at the tea-table truthless stories that I was painting myself a moustache with pear-juice — incidents of an early youth which you no doubt have forgotten, as I was the injured party, but which have re-

[6] *Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 95.

mained deeply rooted in my associations with an ancient green-room called the dining room in a certain house on a hill. At the present day, life is a pretty dull affair, but it passes quick enough. Still, before I die I would like to have one more good time such as I knew in former areas of the earth's history . . ."[7]

Chapter II

The North American Review (1857-1876)

HENRY ADAMS dearly loved to show facts bottoms up. This might be the key to all the essays which he published in the *North American*. His first contribution was made when Lowell was editor — an article which showed that John Smith was an excellent story-teller, but that Pocahontas never saved his head. Adams' researches, no doubt, stirred up a little revolution in history, but no school-teacher of his time ever heard of it, nor, judging from fact, has any guide of the young become edified since his time. The articles on "British Finance in 1816" and "The Bank of England" which followed "Captain John Smith," made the point that England as financier in the past was by no means infallible, and suggested that the States, during their straitened period of reconstruction, might take a hint from history.

Adams had, in fact, begun as antiquary. With his review of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in 1868 he implied, to his friends around him, that he was ready to follow the current of his own time. Sir Charles gave Adams his field compass in token of his admiration. But already Henry's mind was admitting to himself that what attracted it was not evolution,

[7] *Adams' Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 19.

but change. Still Lyell's appreciation was not in vain: Adams had presented the geologist's views in orderly fashion, at great length, and with gusto surprising for a study in uniformity: "Sir Charles," he wrote, "wanders among the monotonous and flowerless forests of the coal-measures without saddening our spirits, and describes the enormous reptiles of the lias in language as calm and little sensational as though ichthyosauri were still gambolling in shoals along the banks of the Thames."

"These articles enrolled him on the permanent staff of the *North American Review*. Precisely what this rank was worth, no one could say; but, for fifty years the *North American Review* had been the stage coach which carried literary Bostonians to such distinction as they had achieved. Few writers had ideas which warranted thirty pages of development, but for such as thought they had, the *Review* alone offered space. An article was a small volume which required at least three months' work, and was paid, at best, five dollars a page. Not many men even in England or France could write a good thirty-page article, and practically no one in America read them; but a few score of people mostly in search of items to steal, ran over the pages to extract an idea or a fact, which was a sort of wild game — a blue fish or a teal — worth anything from fifty cents to five dollars. Newspaper writers had their eye on quarterly pickings. The circulation of the *Review* had never exceeded three or four hundred copies, and the *Review* had never paid its reasonable expenses. Yet it stood at the head of American literary periodicals; it was a source of suggestion to cheaper workers; it reached far into societies that never knew its existence; it was an organ worth playing on; and in the fancy of Henry Adams, it led, in some in-

distinct future, to playing on a New York daily newspaper."[8]

The *North American* led to nothing of the kind. Adams wrote his reviews of Grant's administration — several articles which ran under the name of "The Session" — his Civil Service Reform — all full facts, which were never popular, and brilliant with the spirit of reform. He criticized the administration so successfully that one of the "Sessions" was reprinted by the Democratic National Committee and circulated as a campaign document by the hundred thousand copies. Not even a Senator's insult of likening Adams to a begonia stopped Adams' political pyrotechnics. He criticized the legal tender act, and revealed the New York gold conspiracy of Jay Gould and James Fisk to the *Westminster Review*. The facts of the matter no longer interest anyone, except historians, but Adams' picture of the American Aladdin in his palace was a *tour de force*: "The atmosphere of the Erie offices was not supposed to be disturbed with moral prejudices; and as the opera itself supplied Mr. Fisk's mind with amusement, so the opera *troupe* supplied him with a permanent harem. Whatever Mr. Fisk did was done on an extraordinary scale."[9]

Henry might have continued in this gay manner, but his family interposed and decided that Harvard needed him in its folds again. "His function was not to be that of teacher, but that of editing the *Review* which was to be coupled with the professorship." Adams did not see much reason in changing his course of action; yet he joined Lowell as co-editor of the *Review* in October, 1870.

"The editor had barely time to edit; he had none to write. If copy fell short, he was obliged to scribble a book-review

[8] *The Education*, p. 234.

[9] *Chapters of Erie*, p. 107.

on the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons or the vices of the Popes; . . . for seven years he wrote nothing."[10]

Adams was far from kind to himself in *The Education*. The editorship of the *Review* was by no means a holiday, though it must have been a literary one. Without signing his name to his articles he reviewed every historian that came in the form of a book to his desk — Freeman, Stubbs, Kitchen, Parkman, Van Holst, Bancroft, Green; every work on early law and custom, whether Maine's, Sohm's or Coulange's. In the case of a work like Sohm's *Procedure de la lex Salica*, a foreign product, Adams translated liberally, to explain the author's position.

Occasionally Adams went out of his historical field to comment shortly on the *Saturday Review*. Or Clarke's *Building of a Brain* interested him enough to make him express an opinion which he made of in his *Education*: "In order that the family should exist at all, two individuals were necessary to it. And unless children are to be afterwards reared and educated like chickens in an Egyptian oven upon Phalansterian principles, it is impossible to escape division of labor as an inevitable sequence in their care and education. Female education must be moulded to meet this inevitable contingency, and in point of view, our female education, mental as well as physical, is often a lamentable failure."

Adams' literary holiday especially deserved its epithet when he reviewed Howells' "Wedding Journey," Palgrave's Poems and Tennyson's "Queen Mary." Noticing that Palgrave in his "Alcestis" subdued passion to rhetorical form, Adams ventured a comment which American "Classicists," past and present, must find disturbing: "Neither Euripides nor Sophocles would have cared to throw the treatment of 'Alcestis' into a

[10] *The Education*, p. 307.

mould which was difficult for their countrymen to appreciate, and if they had done so, the sense of effort would have taught them and their audience that they were following an unnatural process. And so with Mr. Palgrave and with all the other poets, great and small, who have imitated the Greeks; as studies, their work is no doubt not only valuable but necessary to high excellence; as poems one might almost say that the greater the success the greater is the failure: the closer the copy the more obvious is the *tour de force*."

On Tennyson, he was fifty years ahead of the sanest criticism of fifty years later. "If Queen Mary is, as has been said, not a subject for high tragical interest, it was for Mr. Tennyson to overcome that difficulty or abandon the subject. It must be acknowledged that the difficulty is not overcome. The drama embodies no profoundly tragical human interest or passion. The Queen Mary of this play is the Queen Mary of history, essentially prosiac even in her most exalted or depressed moments. Mr. Tennyson has added nothing to the thought, such as it was, that history furnished to him. He has not elevated it, he has not intensified it, he has not even suppressed the pettiness of it." Adams summed up his argument and found Tennyson not the master of thought the age cherished, but a master of form, a singer of Elizabethan delicacies:

"Shame upon you, Robin
Shame upon you now!
Kiss me would you? with my hands
Milking the cow?"

Adams stopped writing for the *Review* in 1876. The October number of that year contained an interesting publisher's notice:

"The editors of the *North American Review* having retired from its management on account of a difference of opinion with the proprietors as to the political character of this number, the proprietors, rather than cause an indefinite delay in publication have allowed the number to retain the form which had been given to it, without, however, committing the *Review* to the opinions expressed therein."

The editors who had resigned were Henry Adams and Henry Cabot Lodge.

Chapter III

Cambridge (1870-1877)

ADAMS found six years sufficient time to spend on the *North American*, and he left Harvard at the end of seven. A professor has literary duties, besides his boys, to take care of. Adams prepared himself for his definitive work on American history; he began with the remote past and delivered a lecture on the "Primitive Rights of Women," which he later revised and printed in a book of historical essays. The paper denied that Early Woman under Early Institutions had been a slave. As Adams revealed her she held a high place in primitive society; her attractive force and strength had made the family an institution. As early as 1876 he had found a theme which was to become a passion with him in after years.

On the whole, Harvard left little time for writing. Adams included one essay on Anglo-Saxon Law in a volume which he edited. The essay made a fine piece of exposition, a compact manual of English Law from the earliest times to Edward the Confessor. Adams amused himself with the discovery that his ancestors were sensible enough in legal pro-

cedure to accept "the informal decision of their friends."

He cited the names of German professors, intentionally, or unintentionally, but so graciously that they immediately became humorous: "Nevertheless, it must be conceded that, even here, Dr. Schmidt is, at least technically, correct." The essay gave the impression of precise phraseology and order of thought — two prerequisites not the least important for a poet; and of hidden paradox not in the least to be dispensed with by a wit.

"Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815" was Adams' final work at Harvard. Though the volume had no apparent controversial purpose — it was a work of pure editing, without any notes whatever — it did much to appraise the importance in American history of John Quincy Adams' "Reply to the Appeal of the Massachusetts Federalists" by publishing it.

There Adams' task at Harvard ended. He did not need to teach and edit, to live; and since he had married in 1872 and the society of Washington was more alluring than that of either Boston or Cambridge, he wrote an epitaph for the professor:

" Hic Jacet
Homunculus Scriptor
Doctor Barbaricus
Henricus Adams
Adae Filius Et Evae
Primo Explicuit
Socnam, "[11]

[11] *The Education*, p. 368.

HENRY ADAMS

Chapter IV

An American Plutarch (1879-1884)

IN Washington, with his work on American history during the times of Jefferson and Madison still in view, Adams pursued his researches diligently and invented prolifically. He edited three large volumes of Albert Gallatin's writings, and wrote a voluminous life of him; he wrote, also, a life of John Randolph; and, finally, an article, in French, which he later translated and reprinted, on Napoleon I at St. Domingo. Adams' French was perfectly clear as might have been expected, but the article said nothing of Napoleon and Toussaint l'Ouverture that he was not to repeat in a chapter of his *History*.

The contrast in style between the "Albert Gallatin" and the "John Randolph" was remarkable. The *Life of Gallatin* was more than half quotation; the writer's contributions to the study of the life were the barest facts, though these were many; there was no ornament; emotion was restrained; a very sedate man seemed to be back of all. *The Life of Randolph* quoted less; the facts were there, but fewer, and arranged for effect; emotion was more candid and often gave itself to rigorous judgment; a brilliant satire seemed to be the main intention.

In the *Gallatin* humor was often achieved by quotation, as from Voltaire's note to Gallatin's mother: "Vos figues, madame, sont un présent d'autant plus beau que nous pouvons dire comme l'autre: car ce n'était pas le temps des figues." In the *Randolph* humor served a direct purpose; the joke had to be on John Randolph; the effect was often wrenched through a mere juxtaposition of words — "Henceforward the

little Randolphs ran wild at Bizarre." These distinguishing qualities of the two lives were immediately apparent, though Adams may have had no contrast in mind.

It has been said that Adams shared a family prejudice towards John Randolph; and it was true that Henry Adams could never have been very sympathetic towards a professed *ami des noirs*, who kept slaves all his life. But this does not entirely account for the captious tone of the volume. For that matter, Federalism was also rooted in Adams' nature. He might have been as captious about Gallatin — secretary of the treasury under Jefferson.

Clearly, Adams had a rare type of mind. To him, a poet's religion remained apart from the expression of that religion, and the poet was criticized for the expression; again, a statesman's personal character, per se, was to be judged by the historian only as it affected his statesmanship. John Randolph, in private, might have been the Bacchus of Virginia; the historian necessarily gave not one thought to this side of the man. But when John Randolph, on the floor of the House, showed the statesmanship of a man on a drunken carousal, the historian had a serious reason for judgment. Adams, like the Hellenes, looked upon virtue not as goodness, but as virtuosity, the technical mastery of an art. Historians do not dispute the fact that Albert Gallatin's well-considered ideas on finance, his foreign predilection for saying things clearly, were superior to John Randolph's southern oratory. Adams' method and aim were especially clear in the last lines of each biography. This is the portrait of Gallatin: ". . . his life had left no traces to be erased, and his death would create no confusion and required no long or laborious forethought. He had felt a certain pride in his model means; his avowed principle

had been that a Secretary of the Treasury should not acquire wealth. He had no enemies to forgive." The last lines on Randolph are an immediate contrast: "Neither sickness nor suffering, however, is an excuse for habitual want of self-restraint. Myriads of other men have suffered as much without showing it in brutality or bitterness, and he himself never in his candid moments pretended to defend his errors: 'Time misspent, and faculties misemployed, and senses jaded by labor or impaired by excess, cannot be recalled.' "

As a historian Henry Adams was decidedly unbiased. That in private life he felt whoever thought in French to be clear, and, on the contrary, whatever walked in high boots and was lank, to be grotesque, was another matter.

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY

To Be Continued

CANTOS XXVIII, XXIX, XXX

XXVIII

And God the Father Eternal (Boja d'un Dio !)
Having made all things he cd. think of , felt yet
That something was lacking , and thought
Still more , and reflected that
The Romagnolo was lacking , and
Stamped with his foot in the mud and
Up comes the Romagnolo :
" Gard , yeh bloudy 'angman ! It's me . "

Aso iqa me. All Esimo Dottor Aldo Walluschnig
who with the force of his intellect
with art and assiduous care
has snatched from death by a most perilous operation
the classical Caesarean cut
Marotti , Virginia , in Senni of San Giorgio
at the same time saving her son.
May there move to his laud the applause of all men
and the gratitude of the family.
S.Giorgio, 23d May. A.D. 1925.

It is increasingly difficult to make the fragments of this long poem complete each in itself , and were they entirely so they wd. be wrong for their purpose as parts. I have no desire either for needless mystery or for writing equally needless explanations. In the case of the present three cantos , I believe the thoughtful reader, if he will take the risk of guessing their probable function in the poem as a whole , will probably guess right. If he is unwilling to hazard such guess he may as well go back and read Tennyson.

The two lines of provençal in Canto XXIX are from a poem of Sordello's.

Item : There are people that can swimme in the sea
havens and rivers naked
having bowes and shafts ,
coveting to draw nigh yr. shippe which if they find not
well watched and warded they wil assault
desirous of the bodies of men which they covet for meate,
if you resit them
they dive and wil flee.

And Mr Lourpee sat on the floor of the pension dining
room
Or perhaps it was in the alcove
And about him lay a great mass of pastells ,
That is , the stubbs and broken pencils of pastell,
In pale indeterminate colours.
And he admired the Sage of Concord
" Too broad ever to make up his mind "
And the mind of Lourpee at fifty
Directed him into a room with a certain vagueness
As if he wd. neither come in nor stay out
As if he wd. go neither to the left nor the right
And his painting reflected this habit.

And Mrs Kreffle's mind was made up ,
Perhaps by the pressure of circumstance ,
She described her splendid apartment
In Paris and left without paying her bill
And in fact she wrote later from Sevilla
And requested a shawl , and received it
From the Señora at 300 pesetas cost to the latter
(also without remitting) which
May have explained the lassitude of her daughter ;

And the best paid dramatic critic
Arrived from Manhattan
And was lodged in a bordello (promptly)
Having trusted " his people "
Who trusted a Dutch correspondent ,
And when they had been devoured by fleas
(critic and family)
They endeavoured to break the dutchman's month's contract ;
And the ladies from West Virginia
Preserved the natal aroma ,
And in the railway feeding-room in Chiasso
She sat as if waiting for the train for Topeka —
— That was the year of the strikes —
When we came up toward Chiasso
By the last on the narrow-gauge ,
Then by tramway from Como
Leaving the lady who loved bullfights
With her eight trunks and her captured hidalgo ,
And a dutchman was there who was going
To take the boat at Trieste ,
Sure , he was going to take it ;
Would he go round by Vienna ? He would not.
Absence of trains wdnt. stop him.
So we left him at last in Chiasso
Along with the old woman from Kansas ,
Solid Kansas , her daughter had married that Swiss
Who kept the buffet in Chiasso.
Did it shake her ? It did not shake her.
She sat there in the waiting room , solid Kansas ,
Stiff as a cigar-store indian from the Bowery
Such as one saw in "the nineties " ,

First sod of bleeding Kansas
That had produced this ligneous solidness .
If thou wilt go to Chiasso wilt find that indestructable
female
As if waiting for the train to Topeka
In the buffet of that station on the bench that
Follows the wall , to the right side as you enter.
And Clara Leonora wd. come puffing so that one
Cd. hear her when she reached the foot of the stairs ,
Squared , chunky , with her crooked steel spectacles
And her splutter and her face full of teeth
And old Rennert wd. sigh heavily
And look over the top of his lenses and
She wd. arrive after due interval with a pinwheel
Concerning Grillparzer or - pratzer
Or whatever follow the Grill- , and il Gran Maestro
Mr Liszt had come to the home of her parents
And taken her on his prevalent knee and
She held that a sonnet was a sonnet
And ought never be destroyed ,
And had taken a number of courses
And continued with hope of degrees and
Ended in a Baptist learnery
Somewhere near the Rio Grande.

And they wanted more from their women ,
Wanted 'em jacked up a little
And sent over for teachers (Ceylon)
So Loica went out and died there
After her time in the post-Ibsen movement.

One day in Smith's room
Or may be it was that 1908 medico's
Put the gob in the fire-place
Ole Byers and Feigenbaum and Joe Bromley ,
Joe hittin' the gob at 25 feet
Everytime , ping on the metal
(Az ole man Comley wd. say : Boys ! . .
Never cherr terbakker ! Hrwwkke tth !
Never cherr terbakker !)
" Missionaries , " said Joe , " I was out back of Jaffa ,
I dressed in the costume , used to like the cafés ,
All of us settin' there on the ground ,
Pokes his head in the doorway : " Iz there any "
He says " Gar'
Damn
Man here
Thet kan speak ENGLISH ? ! "
Nobody said anything fer a while
And then I said : " Hu er' you ? "
" I'm er misshernary I am "
He sez , " chucked off a naval boat in Shanghai .
I worked at it three months , nothin' to live on. "
Beat his way overland .
I never saw the twenty I lent him. "

Great moral secret service , plan , Tribune is told
limit number to thirty thousand ,
only highest type will be included ,
propaganda within ranks of the veterans
to keep within bounds when they come into
contact with personal liberty .... with the french
authorities

that includes the Paris police . . .
Strengthen franco-american amity.

NARCOTIC CHARGE : Frank Robert Iriquois
gave his home Oklahama City . . . Expelled July 24th.
" Je suis . . . .
(Across the bare planks of a diningroom in the Pyrenees)
. . . . plus fort que . .
. . le Boud-hah ! "
(No contradiction)
" Je suis . . . .
. . . . plus fort que le . .
. . Christ !
(No contradiction)
"J'aurai . .
aboli . .
le poids !"
(Silence , somewhat unconvinced.)
And in his waste house , detritus ,
As it were the cast buttons of splendours ,
The harbour of Martinique, drawn every house , and in
detail ,
Green shutters on half the houses ,
Half the thing still unpainted.
" . . . sont
" l'in. . fan. .terie KOH"
lon - i - al - e
voce tinnula
MAR-
vieux -ins ! "
" Ce sont les
-sou-

He made it , feitz Marcebrus , the words and the music ,
Uniform out for Peace Day
And that lie about the Tibetan temple
(happens by the way to be true ,
they do carry you upon their shoulders)
Bad for his medical practice.

"Retreat ? " said Dr Wymans , " It was marrvelous ,
Secret . Turks knew nothing about it . . . .
Uh ! Helped me to get my wounded aboard. "
And that man sweat blood to get through that railway ,
And what he ever got out of it ?
And one day he drove down to the whorehouse
Cause all the farmers had consented
and granted the right of way ,
But the pornoboskos wdn't. have it at any price
And said he'd shoot the surveyors ,
But he didn't shoot ole pop in the buckboard ,
He giv him the right of way.
And they thought they had him flummox'd ,
Nobody'd sell any rails ;
Till he went up to the north of New York state
And found some there on the ground
And he had 'em pried loose and shipped 'em
And had 'em laid here through the forest .

Thing is to find something simple
As for example Pa Stadtvolk ;
Hooks to hang gutters on roofs ,
A spike and half-circle, patented 'em and then made 'em ;
Worth a good million , not a book in the place ;
Got a horse about twenty years after , seen him

Of a Saturday afternoon
When they'd taken down an old fence ,
Ole Pa out there knockin the nails out
(To *save* 'em) I hear he smoked good cigars.
And when the Prince Oltrepassimo died , saccone ,
That follow the coffins ,
He lay there on the floor of the chapel
On a great piece of patterned brocade
And the walls solid gold about him
And there was a hole in one of his socks
And the place open that day to the public ,
Kids running in from the street
And a cat there licking himself
And then stepped over the Principe ,
Discobolus upstairs and the main door
Not opened since '70
When the Pope shut himself into the Vatican
And they had scales on the table
To weigh out the food on fast days ;
And he lay there with his hood back
And the hole in one of his socks.

" Buk ! " said the Second Baronet, " eh . . .
" Thass a funny lookin' buk " said the Baronet
Looking at Bayle , folio , 4 vols; in gilt leather , " Ah . . .
" Wu . . Wu . . wot you goin' eh to do with ah . .
" . . ah read-it ? "
Sic loquitur eques.

And lest it pass with the day's news
Thrown out with the daily paper ,
Neither official pet

Nor Levine with the lucky button
Went on into darkness
Saw naught above but close dark ,
Weight of ice on the fuselage
Borne into the tempest , black cloud wrapping their
wings ,
The night hollow beneath them
And fell with dawn into ocean
But for the night saw neither sky nor ocean
And found ship ... why ? .... how ? ... by the
Azores.
And she was a bathing beauty ; Miss Arkansas or Texas
And the man quasi anonymous
Neither a placard for non-smokers or non-alcohol
Nor for the code of Peoria ;
Or one-eyed Hinchcliffe and Elsie
Blackeyed bitch that married dear Dennis ,
That flew out into nothingness
And her father was the son of one too
That got the annulment.

XXIX

Pearl , great sphere , and hollow ,
Mist over lake , full of sunlight ,
Pernella concubina
The sleeve green and shot gold over her hand
Wishing her son to inherit
Expecting the heir ainé be killed in battle
He being courageous , poisoned his brother puiné
Laying blame on Siena
And this she did by a page
Bringing war once more on Pittigliano
And the page repented and told this
To Nicolo (ainé) Pittigliano
Who won back that rock from his father
"still doting on Pernella his concubine "
The sand that night like a seal's back
Glossy beneath the lanthorns.
From the Via Sacra
(fleeing what band of Tritons)
Up to the open air
Over that mound of the hippodrome :
Liberans et vinculo ab omni liberatos
As who with four hands at the cross roads
By king's hand or sacerdos'
are given their fredom
— Save who were at Castra San Zeno .....
Cunizza for God's love , for remitting the soul of her father
— May hell take the traitors of Zeno .

And fifth begat he Alberic
And sixth the Lady Cunizza .
In the house of the Cavalcanti
anno 1265
Free go they all as by full manumission
All serfs of Eccelin my father da Romano
Save those who were with Alberic at Castra San Zeno
and let them go also
With hell's devils in soul and in body .
And sixth the Lady Cunizza
That was given first to Richard St Boniface
And Sordello subtracted her from that husband
And lay with her in Tarviso
Till he was driven out of Tarviso
And she left with a soldier named Bonius
nimium amorata in eum
And went from one place to another
" The light of this star o'ercame me "
Running up the most awful bills .
And this Bonius was killed on a sunday
and she had then a Lord from Braganza
and then a house in Verona .

Looked from the planks to heaven ,
Said Juventus : " Immortal . . .
He said : " Ten thousand years before now . . .
Or he said : " Passing into the point of the cone" ,
Begin by making the replica .
Thus Lusty Juventus , in September ,
In cool air , under sky ,
Before the residence of the funeral director
Whose daughter's conduct caused comment.

But the old man did not know how he felt
Nor cd. remember what prompted the utterance .
He said : " What I know , I have known ,
" How can the knowing cease knowing ? " .

By the lawn of the senior elder
He continued his ambulation :
" Matter is the lightest of all things ,
" Chaff , rolled into balls , tossed , whirled in the aether ,
" Undoubtedly crushed by the weight .
" Light also proceeds from the eye ;
" In the globe over my head
" Twenty feet in diameter , thirty feet in diameter
— Glassy , the glaring surface —
" There are many reflections
" So that one may watch them turning and moving
" With heads down now , and now up .

He went on toward the amateur student of minerals
That later went bankrupt ;
He went on past the house of the local funny man ,
Jo Tyson that had a camera . His daughter was bow-legged
And married the assembly-man's son.
O-hon dit que'ke fois au vi'age ....

Past the house of the three retired clergymen
Who were too cultured to keep their jobs .
Langour has cried unto langour
about the marshmallow-roast
(Let us speak of the osmosis of persons)
The wail of the phonograph has penetrated their marrow
(Let us ....

The cicadas continue uninterrupted.
With a vain emptiness the virgins return to their homes
With a vain exasperation
The ephebe has gone back to his dwelling
The djassban has hammered and hammered
The gentleman of fifty has reflected
That it is perhaps just as well .
Let things remain as they are.

The mythological exterior lies on the moss in the forest
And questions him about Darwin .
And with a burning fire of phantasy
he replies with " Deh ! nuovoletta .....
So that she would regret his departure.
Drift of weed in the bay
She seeking a guide , a mentor ,
He aspires to a career with honour
To step in the tracks of his elders ;
a greater incomprehension ?
There is no greater incomprehension
Than between the young and the young .
The young seek comprehension ;
The middleaged to fulfill their desire .

Sea weed dried now , and now floated ,
mind drifts , weed , slow youth , drifts ,
Stretched on the rock , bleached and now floated ;
Wein , Weib , TAN AOIDAN
Chiefest of these the second , the female
Is an element , the female
Is a chaos
An octopus

A biological process
and we seek to fulfill ....
TAN AOIDAN , our desire , drift ....
Ailas e que'm fau miey huelh
Quar no vezon so qu'ieu vuelh .
Our mulberry leaf , woman , TAN AOIDAN ,
" Nel ventre tuo , o nella mente mia ,
" Yes, Milady , precisely, if you wd. have anything
properly made. "

" Faziamo tutte le due ...
" No not in the palm-room . The lady says it is
Too cold in the palm-room. Des Valeurs ,
Nom de Dieu , et
encore des valeurs.
She is submarine , she is an octopus , she is
A biological process ,
So Arnaut turned there
Above him the wave pattern cut in the stone
Spire-top alevel the well-curb
And the tower with cut stone above that , saying :
" I am afraid of the life after death . "
and after a pause :
" Now , at last , I have shocked him. "
And another day or evening toward sundown by the arena
(les gradins)
A little lace at the wrist
And not very clean lace either ....
And I , " But this beats me ,
" Beats me , I mean that I do not understand it ,
" This love of death that is in them.
Let us consider the osmosis of persons

nondum orto jubare ;
The tower , ivory ; the clear sky ,
Ivory rigid in sunlight
And the pale clear of the heaven
Phoibos of narrow thighs ,
The cut cool of the air ,
Blossom cut on the wind , by Helios
Lord of the Light's edge , an April
Blown round the feet of the God.
Beauty on an ass-cart
Sitting on five sacks of laundry
That wd. have been the road by Perugia
That leads out to San Piero . Eyes brown topaz
Brookwater over brown sand ,
The white hounds on the slope ,
Glide of water ; lights and the prore
Silver beaks out of night
Stone , bough over bough ,
lamps fluid in water
Pine by the black trunk of its shadow
And on hill, black trunks of the shadow ,
The trees melted in air.

XXX

Compleynt , compleynt I hearde upon a day ,
Artemis singing , Artemis , Artemis
Agaynst Pity lifted her wail :
Pity causeth the forests to fail ,
Pity slayeth my nymphs .
Pity spareth so many an evil thing ,
Pity befouleth April ,
Pity is the root and the spring .
Now if no fayre creature followeth me
It is on account of Pity ,
It is on account that Pity forbideth them slaye .
All things are made foul in this season ,
This is the reason , none may seek purity
Having for foulnesse pity
And things growne awry ;
No more do my shaftes fly
To slay . Nothing is now clean slayne
But rotteth away.

In Paphos , on a day
I also heard :
..... goeth not with young Mars to playe
But she hath pity on a doddering fool ,
She tendeth his fyre ,
She keepeth his embers warm .
Time is the evil . Evil .
A day , and a day
Walked the young Pedro baffled ,
a day and a day
After Ignez was murdered .

Came the Lords in Lisboa
a day , and a day
In homage . Seated there
dead eyes ,
Dead hair under the crown ,
The King still young there beside her.

Came Madame ὕΛΗ ὕλη
Clothed with the light of the altar
And with the price of the candles .
" Honour ? Balls for yr. honour !
Take two million and swallow it . "
Is come Messire Alfonso { Alfonso I d'Este
And is departed by boat for Ferrara
And has passed here without saying " O . "

Whence have we carved it in metal
Here working in Caesar's fane :
To the Prince Caesare Borgia
Duke of Valent and Aemelia
. . . and here have I brought cutters of letters
and printers not vile and vulgar
(in Fano Caesaris)
notable and sufficient compositors
and a die-cutter for greek fonts and hebrew
named Messire Francesco da Bologna
not only of the usual types but he hath excogitatëd
a new form called cursive or chancellry letters
nor was it Aldous nor any other but it was
this Messire Francesco who hath cut all Aldous his letters
with such grace and charm as is known

Hieronymous Soncinus
7th July 1503
and as for text we have taken it
from that of Messire Laurentius
and from a codex once of the Lords Malatesta ....
And in August that year died Pope Alessandro Borgia ,
Il Papa morì .

explicit
canto
XXX.

EZRA POUND

NINTH DECLAMATION

HOW — did I not expend great thought upon the moulding of my career to trivial forms? Did I not vote for quietude though procured at the price of ill-humour and underlying envy? I was set for humbleness, adjusting both my mind and my economy to negative living.

Where is the point whereat resistances, coming upon us from without, cease to be obstacles and emerge as guidance? Are there events which one can look upon, not as accident, but as grave intervention; are there changes unforeseen which transcend the fortuitous to become signallings? Already the things I move among are left behind me, and the familiar is vested with an unclean strangeness. "By what checks could you contrive to remain here?" I have asked myself, watching both wife and children unhappily, as though there were an unquestionable cause for my departure, known and accepted by us all, as though I were called away to defend them. These tender fellows — I believe there is much in which I could instruct them subsequently. Am I permitted to make them of this seed, yet deny them my study of its correctives? Am I not, of all men, obliged to school them in their disease? "By what elation," I have also asked myself, "could you consider their abandonment?" — and entranced by my own thoughts, picturing my farewell even as I sat surrounded, I felt the encouragement of this woman's pitying eyes. My features, I understood, had shown pain; and I was chagrined at her kindliness, all the more poignant because misplaced. Did she assume that a headache such as had attacked me frequently

in recent months was now upon me? Unwittingly she was rebuking with her solicitations. Though fearing that I might in sleep or delirium speak to wound her, and though trying to imagine some way whereby I could be assured of not doing so, I know that I have daily offered her dismaying evidence of my unrest.

Shall I, after planning, entrust my future to the flipping of a coin? Shall I pluck a flower, and remove its petals in succession, saying, "I leave, I remain," alternately? Ah, should the command by hazard decree my staying, I fear that I should pluck another flower, in turn despoiling it of petals, but thus revising my formula: "Obey, or do not obey, the first."

See what I had done in my manner of bargaining. How I had come here, wounded, and been restored by Genevieve. How I had married here, become the father of two children, and erected a structure of citizenship within the understanding of my neighbours — healing myself first by clandestine love, which was dismissed, and thence by some prosperity. Until persons sought assistance, which I found no cause for refusing them, so that a further share of good repute was engrafted upon me. And but for the deeper protests of the spirit, in this too there was a healing.

Was there not final surrender, coming with my consent to write for local purposes, a play for the students of the village? A nearby town, smaller than our own, formed the soundest butt for my shameless humour, as the audience was already pledged to laughter by the subject. And there were certain small politicians, ingloriously routed in the last election, whom it was safe to ridicule. I had known a gentle-minded person who was content to do the bidding of others, but would confront a blizzard at midnight to make certain that his livestock was in comfort. I had wished him all wealth

and happiness, but even prior to the growth of his deafness he was silent to the verge of ignorance. I could readily give him nobility in this play. Thus gambling with loaded dice I was assured of my dingy winnings. Thence to a partial office in the school — and thereupon, by resignment too deep for irony, my participating in the cultural improvement of my neighbours. (May these blunt materials in this concatenation trace a more significant destiny. Oh, vague stirrings at the embarrassed crackling of the knuckles at handshake, for her fingers had been relaxed by travel. Oh, glorious termination of a blind pilgrimage!) If one, in fleeing, takes the piloting of his life into his own hands; if each modicum of his defense is the reward of plotting; if he digs in a secret hole and buries there at midnight the small coins of his imperfect happiness; and if in a new event, unthought of, he finds the intrusion of other agencies, dare he not hold that a gentler existence has sought him out? This they shall not take from me. I have considered them one by one, asking: is he the man by whom I could be constrained in the interests of approval — and I have seen that to a *consensus omnium,* as thus analyzed, I was almost wholly insensitive.

Commanders, gamblers, and the adventurous, through dealing with alternatives, are led by arbitrary casualties to believe in the coercion of fate and to imagine exceptional purposes whereby their day depends upon the ritual tying of a shoe lace. To feel hazard as an entity, bearing upon oneself, one need but perceive the consistent arise for a time out of the uncertain. A storm blowing steadily against the bended body seems animate and invites a personal defiance which points beyond our reason. Hear how I have been led — see how I was made ready — as though for my rescue a papal staff had sprouted.

As we stood in the valley looking down upon the trim grain fields, there was great comfort in the displaying of my acreage. "And the herd?" Florence asked me, "the herd also is yours?" "The herd also," I answered, though this was not exact, for some of the cattle had been sold recently and not yet delivered. But the herd looked smaller from our great height, and my reply was for their proper number as they would have seemed had we been closer.

Let us lie, cheat, dissemble, beg connivance of any, forestall their anger by feigned cordiality should they come to accuse us, ask them kind questions to make their indignation more difficult, praise their despicable children to disarm them; let us cajole, simper, brush hypothetical dust-spots from their sleeves; let us admit all manner of compromise to avoid their forcing of an issue. But should they force an issue I will meet it. They will find such refusal to relinquish, such growling over a bone, as will recall portions of their lives long since stifled, and make them go from me with a double hatred. How ask that one return to his dungeon after assuagement? "Do you remember, Florence . . ." I have said to her, thereupon sharing some harmless restoration of our past. Oh, Anthony, this day I confessed how I once spied upon her to learn whether in all ways she was loyal to you — and this remembrance was a source of amusement to us.

"Hubert!" I exclaimed at her mention of him; "I had forgotten Hubert!" And were he here I could have embraced him, though he would have poisoned me for my words. For he had given more thought to making himself unforgettable than ever a Roman gave to fame. I pictured him again, racing in terror from a cow — surely a rabid beast, Anthony, for she came towards us with low-hanging udders, and mooing to be milked. The presence of the herd below doubtless suggest-

ed this preposterous incident to me. We reconstructed Hubert, who could not share a confidence without fearing that it would be abused, but despite such misgivings could not remain silent. We rehearsed his passion for the worst newspapers and the best literature. His militant fastidiousness, as he quarreled scrupulously with every servant, discharging his valets for failing to remind him always of what he could never once remind himself. His horror of noises. "Hear it, hear it!" he shrieked, as we were all walking on the beach at night. We fell silent, listening with bowed heads so that the wavelets, working among the pebbles, became intimate. And from far off came the faint, almost purring sound of a motor. "Like a trombone at your shoulder," his sister said quickly, for she knew what was expected of us. "Where shall we turn next!" and Hubert was audibly desolate. Florence recalled his helping her through puddled streets, in his politeness growing petulant when, owing to ineptitude on her part, he could not accommodate her quickly enough. "Yet there was another Hubert," I admonished her, the Hubert who sailed his yachts in the gale, tacking at fiendish angles, panting from elation and physical strain, and howling lines from Beowulf above the storm. There were two Huberts, a land-Hubert and a sea-Hubert. And how different they both were from his crony, whom we also met here, with the sorrowing face of a hound, the victim of his gullet, sighing from the effects of his last meal, showing the reliques of some past sensitivity now reduced to appetite — gentle when not morose from his burden — and peacefully accepting his daily martyrdom of omelettes and pork as he hastened to his grave. Parts of him drooped upon other parts, as though a body's flesh were held firm by cords and all the cords of his body had been severed.

Even with much greater likelihood of an existence after

death, how could mankind shape its course by any other slogan than that of our glorious presence? To move vigorously through chill water, and thereupon stretch like a snake in the sun — to do this actually, and to make the subtler pleasures of our living similar — surely this is the very core of gratitude to Makers. If I built a house I should ask to see that house stand self-assertively, at peace with its placing. Let us then be as though builded. Let man take each brilliant day as one dropped from an eternity of silence. Let him enjoy the unique organization of his hulk. Let him be rained upon, wind driven, sunned, firm-footed — living first among the elements, and shaping other experiences by this immediacy. Surely no flower protests at withering in the autumn; even subsidence can be a purpose — and days of gentle ecstasy can bring us to welcoming our decline. Henceforth I will look upon no man with envy who can but repeat in his terms what I have discovered in my own. Nature has become the carpet of our sportiveness; each surrounding object ministers with appropriate aid. Here is a skilful seller, recommending under many guises, repeating in the sound of birds what is suggested by stirrings of the air, maintaining by sunlight what is likewise proposed as the smell of damp soil, cradling the eye by the forms of a hill to make equivalence for the rushing of water. True, there are frogs, young and incautious, which land betimes in the belly of a heron. The heron's song is not their song. There are the sacrificed — there are those for whom the world was not created, but lo! I am not one of them. Here is a miracle prior to the embellishments of legend; here is a present wonder. For long I have hunted — and now I am feeding. Perhaps I am content.

Those who are to drudge beneath the earth, in the mines, the sewers, the stench of tunnels — let them be bred as other

than mankind, give thought to the monstrous preparing of their characters as to their sinews. Teach them that alleviation is neither possible nor to be desired, instruct them in hog-like appetites, nurture their brutality as we encourage in others affection. Do them at least this minimum of justice. Study them that their denigration may be thorough. Guide them downwards, by this sinister aruspicy, this prognostication by inspection of the entrails.

By its very thoroughness my exile had unmade itself. Learning that a company of actors in bad circumstances was touring the adjacent counties, I brought *The Merchant of Venice* to this village. Upon the troup's arrival I noted with relief that Portia was beautiful, and immediately thereafter saw that she was Florence.

Often in these years I have climbed the hill on which we now stood, crossed the blunt, timbered ridge, and wound by a briary road into the next valley. Here are the ruins of an old house, among deserted meadows, the rim of hills making it a separate world. It is a lonely spot, where in summer the trout stream sinks beneath the pebbles. I have gone through the littered rooms, opened musty cupboards, and rummaged among old rags with the rung of a broken chair. I have examined this decrepit house, waiting — and into its dismalness I now guided Florence, that her bright curiosity might give it different echoes. Leaning in the doorway, looking down upon the rotted flooring of the porch, we talked with some gravity. "For every man," I told her, "there must be something towards which he would make his way across dead bodies." And cautiously, never without obliqueness, we discussed our feelings towards each other.

KENNETH BURKE

BARBADOS

There were ants in the food
and scorpians about the bed
when he lay sick in Barbados.

take one pill each hour
and look out at the field of grass
in the sunlight and fresh wind.

the streets of the town are white
and the buildings a white glare—
"Evangeline" is on the shelves
of the hospital library.

On the boat the Doctor looks at the stars
he turns a card-board chart
and puts a pin in labeled Mars
he wears a white coat
and talks of elephants he's seen in India.

take one pill each hour

that stretch of cliff with sea-gulls
and harsh sand
the story of the haunted churchyard
and the pirate's tower
the sun-set and the star-map on the ocean—

emotion recollected in tranquillity.

WILLIAM BRENTON

GOD IS MAMMON

I

THE Editors of The Hound & Horn have invited me to compare in these pages some representative expression of current American views with a similar expression of French views. The invitation results to some extent, I imagine, from that American respect for France and things French which was once manifested in the framing of the Constitution of the United States and the designing of the City of Washington. But if this respect has lasted from those days, it has long ceased to be effective. When, for instance, a Brownell returns from a few years' stay in Paris and proclaims that "they order this matter better in France," he receives scant attention. That is to say, American admiration of France, once almost a cult, is now no more than an agreeable sentimentality. Its present quality may be apprehended by reflecting that if, on the one hand, the report that Mr. Sherwood Anderson, on finding himself for the first time alighting from a train at the Gare du Nord, burst into tears, is credible enough, the assertion that Mr. Theodore Dreiser has been influenced by Balzac is, on the other hand, passing strange.

If, however, Columbia rose long ago from sitting at the Gallic knee and went her own way, retaining of her former tutelage only a fond memory, one cannot be again in France, as I have recently been, after some years spent in the United States, without being struck by the extent to which the French have of late taken to emulating America. It is not so much

that the French are following in America's footsteps, as the result of deliberate study of American thought and methods, although, for instance, already before the War the name of William James ranked with the French very high indeed, and the best study of contemporary American industry is, so I understand, the work of two Frenchmen. It is rather that the orientation which the French have come to give to their activities leads them to adopt views and ways which are American by origin and which have, already for generations, set the trend of the American effort.

I lack space for more than one example. A leading Parisian publisher, Mr. Bernard Grasset, has been professing in a book, *La Chose Littéraire,* his business faith. For a Frenchman to succeed today as a publisher, he must, Mr. Grasset asserts, have a taste for persuasion. A publishing reputation now depends on the steady discovery of interesting and exciting new books to publish, and also, and just as much, on the imposition of the discoveries on the public. For the buying of books has, he points out, greatly increased in France since the War. A new reading public has arisen, and it is eager rather than discriminating. To guide this public as to what it shall read has accordingly become for the French publisher a duty. At the same time Mr. Grasset feels, he says, that when he obtains from an author a licence to publish one of that author's works, he is thereby integrating in a way the book in himself. He is adding to that of himself which may be immortal. For all creators aspire, he declares, to immortality. Of such aspirations the publisher's is, however, the most modest, the one there is the least shame in avowing. For an author, however great, to announce that his work is going to survive him for centuries is preposterous. But a publisher who has had a share in the important book-production of an age may quite legit-

imately claim that his name will be uttered in the very remote future.

Thus, according to Mr. Grasset, the French publisher is no longer content today to be a mere speculative tradesman. He sets up, on the one hand, to be the reading public's mentor, and, on the other hand, to be, quite as much as any of his authors, a creator, and a creator, moreover, whose prospects are greater than theirs of immortality.

This is precisely the American publisher's attitude to his business. What has hitherto distinguished American business-men from business-men of other nationalities is that American business-men are not satisfied with pursuing the greatest possible volume of trade. They insist also on pretending that that natural, if sordid, pursuit is really the pursuit of an ideal. Their pretense is typified by their incessant babbling about "Service!" In that the American publisher is no exception. It is not enough for him that he should sell books. He has to maintain, further, that the books are good books, and that the public must buy them because he says that they are good, and he knows. His pretensions to critical authority have been so successful that I have myself seen the editor of a literary weekly visit a publisher in order to learn from him how to review a novel which the publisher was bringing out. The visit was in no way inspired by the advertisement manager; it was made in a spirit of simple inquiry. Also, of course, the American publisher poses as a creator. I used to wonder how on earth a publisher could be a creator, so when the wife of a leading New York publisher told me one day that her husband was creative, I ventured to ask in what way. "Sure, Joe is creative," she promptly replied; "why, he always gets the better of a bargain!"

But, as Mr. Grasset's book shows, the American business-

man's peculiarity of claiming to be, in his pursuit of profits, the executor of an ideal, the public's devoted ministrant, is his no longer. French publishers have, according to Mr. Grasset, been converted to the American publishers' outlook, and as with publishing, so, it could be shown, with other forms of French commercial enterprise. Today France, and indeed the whole of Europe, is adopting the American attitude to life. Today it is eastward, not westward, the course of empire takes its way.

That being so, it seemed to me, as in Paris I considered THE HOUND & HORN'S invitation, that I should not be able, as requested, to compare some expression of current American views with a similar expression of French views, but should find myself led, when I came to pick upon two books for comparison, to do the opposite, to compare some expression of current French views with a similar expression of American views.

II

And this is what has happened. The two books I propose to compare are a little essay by the distinguished French novelist, Mr. François Mauriac,[1] and a rather large essay by Mr. Walter Lippmann.[2]

Mr. Mauriac having produced a short biography of Racine, Mr. André Gide wrote to him as follows:

> Vous vous félicitez que Dieu, avant de ressaisir Racine, lui ait laissé le temps d'écrire ses pièces, de les écrire *malgré* sa conversion. En somme, ce que vous voulez, c'est la permission d'écrire *Destins* [one of Mr. Mauriac's latest novels]; la permission d'être chrétien sans avoir à brûler vos livres; et c'est ce qui vous les fait écrire de telle

[1] *Dieu et Mammon.* Avec une étude de Ramon Fernandez. Edition limited to 5,000 copies (Paris: Le Capitole).

[2] *A Preface to Morals* (New York: The Macmillan Company).

sorte que, bien que chrétien, vous n'ayez pas à les désavouer. Tout cela (ce compromis rassurant qui permette d'aimer Dieu sans perdre de vue Mammon), tout cela nous vaut cette conscience angoissée qui donne tant d'attrait à votre visage, tant de saveur à vos écrits, et doit tant plaire à ceux qui, tout en abhorrant le péché, seraient bien désolés de n'avoir plus à s'occuper du péché.

The little essay is Mr. Mauriac's reply to this charge.

To write is, he says, to yield oneself. The reader nowadays makes that evident enough, for the reader seeks the writer within the writer's work in order to learn from the writer's kinship with himself what should be his own attitude to life. But having thus surrendered himself, the writer finds that hostile criticism compels him to confront his own conception of what he is with the reflection he produces in the hostile intelligence. That is what Mr. Gide's charge leads him himself to do. Is he, he asks himself, what Mr. Gide says he is?

Mr. Mauriac was, he goes on to say, born a Catholic. He could never become anything else. Yet at twenty he realized that he was as passionate as any other fellow of the same age. Nature was, he noticed, slowly gaining on Grace. He felt that he must either yield to God or to the nether power. He could not adapt Christianity to his passions. So there seemed to be only one course open: to launch himself into writing, to express, render sensible, the monster he could not overcome. Thereupon, he was faced with another dilemma: on the one hand, artistic disinterestedness; on the other, what he called the apostles' sense of purpose. Even then, however, he never dreamed of escaping from the Catholic fold. But if he has remained a Catholic, it is in spite of himself. That is what must be understood. And that being so, there can, he says, be no question of a reassuring compromise enabling him to love God without losing sight of Mammon. Of course one

cannot serve two masters, but in forsaking one for the other, he has continued to be reminded of the Forsaken One's power over him. His most spontaneous writings must bear a certain impress.

Why should it not be realized, he asks, that a man may be the prisoner of a metaphysic with which, mind and body, he disagrees? And that if such a wretch is lucky enough to own some facility of expression, his writing will occupy him and aid him in the untangling of his life? He will convince himself that what an artist needs essentially is something special to say, that an artist must express his personal drama. He will not want to die without leaving behind the written, definite expression of that drama, of that vision he has of the world and of its beings.

Mr. Mauriac understands, he continues, that imaginative writing has no value unless it apprehends the living man. To him the falsification of life is repugnant. But he is also aware that what he writes may have incalculable consequences. For imaginative writing is, after all, the depicting of the passions. So a Racine comes to give it up. Few writers, however, are equal to such a renunciation. Indeed, no human force can reduce a writer in his fruitful period to silence, and Mr. Mauriac knows of no instance in which even God's Grace has done so. A true writer must write, unless he has nothing left to say. But why? No doubt in order to break out of his own solitude, to enter into communion with other beings by inflecting their lives. A writer can, however, influence his fellows only if he is sincere, if he portrays life exactly as it is, and never distorts it for the sake of proving or demonstrating. Admittedly such disinterestedness may expose his readers to risks. Yet it remains that those of Mr. Mauriac's novels which have seemed most daring to certain people are, he says, the

very novels which have influenced other souls most powerfully in a religious direction.

Thus does Mr. Mauriac defend himself against Mr. Gide. Now consider Mr. Lippmann. He has not to defend himself. He has written his essay because he feels that the world needs a new faith. He begins by pointing out that "the acids of modernity" have dissolved what he calls "the ancestral order." The religion which guaranteed to our fathers an order of the universe has become incredible. Our very disposition to believe has gone. We are disillusioned not only with that against which we have rebelled, but also with our rebellion. At the same time many of us feel "that there is a vacancy" in our lives, and even the most placid of us cannot be wholly at peace. The acids of modernity have not dissolved the needs which the great fictions fulfilled. In vain have we sought to satisfy those needs afresh by turning art or science into a religion. There is anarchy in our hearts. How is it to be appeased? Mr. Lippmann answers that when men can no longer believe that they are governed from heaven, they must find ways of governing themselves. When men can no longer be theists, they must, if they are civilized, become humanists.

The humanistic view rests, he continues, on human psychology and an interpretation of human experience. We have a kind of dim memory of a Golden Age: it is a deep conviction that happiness is attainable. Can we attain it, however, by blindly pursuing our desires, or must we adapt our desires to the world? All the books of wisdom agree that man's first task must be to reconstruct himself. They dwell on renunciation. This may mean the utter refusal to satisfy our desires. But that form of renunciation quickly fails. Impulses are not suppressed by being thwarted, and a period of self-denial comes to be followed by a period of self-indulgence. Proper

renunciation consists in satisfying our desires, but in satisfying them harmoniously. This kind of renunciation is the fruit of growth, a growth that is possible to the individual during his life. The history of each soul can be conceived as a progress from infantilism to maturity. That a man has become mature will then mean that he has reached a stage of development at which he no longer expects the world to adapt itself to his wishes, but spontaneously adjusts his wishes to the world. An individual life should be regarded as a gradual process of such harmonious adjustment of desires to the objects of desire. That is, Mr. Lippmann believes, the matrix of humanism. In such a conception is to be found, he suggests, the modern substitute for that conception of divine government which dominated the now vanished theocratic culture.

The conception of human nature as developing behaviour is accepted by all modern psychologists. That is to say, modern psychology confirms the insight of the sages as to how man can find peace and happiness — in a form of renunciation. We can still believe such religious teachers as Aristotle, the author of the Fourth Gospel, Buddha, and Spinoza, because in their teaching the theocratic principle is irrelevant. Quite independently of that principle, they emphasize the need for the education and conversion of the human will. Taken in this way, religion is found to have escaped dissolution by the acids of modernity. We can still believe, because we can understand, that if we are to solve our perplexities, it must be by growing disinterested.

Moreover, the ideal of disinterestedness is, Mr. Lippmann believes, inherent and inevitable in the modern world. In three great phases of human interest, in business, in government, and in sexual relations, he finds the ideal to be now implicit and necessary. What dominates modern business is

its impersonality. Business naturally tends to socialize itself: *laissez-faire* has gone. Corporations become so vast that those engaged in them must be disinterested: they have to display initiative instead of dependence, and that not for personal advantage. Government in the great nations has changed from being the directing of the community's affairs to being the harmonizing of the direction which the community itself gives to its affairs. The government no longer rules; it adds its force to men's rule of themselves. That is why prohibition enforcement is a failure, and the prevention of jewel-smuggling a success. In sexual relations parenthood has been made voluntary by birth control and lasting marriage by easy divorce. This means, to Mr. Lippmann, that for marriage to result in children, and for it to be itself a successful partnership, the parties must grow disinterested.

He concludes:

> We begin to see, I think, that the evidence converges upon the theory that what the sages have prophesied as high religion, what psychologists delineate as matured personality, and the disinterestedness that the Great Society requires for its practical fulfillment, are all of a piece, and are the basic elements of modern morality.[3]

Such are, imperfectly summarized, the contents of the two books. Perhaps it will seem to my reader that the two have little in common. What, however, I find is that they are two examples of one operation. Further, I find that it is the French which should be compared with the American, and not *vice versa*, because, of the two writers, the American performs the operation both more ingeniously and more thoroughly.

III

To me it appears unmistakable that what Mr. Mauriac is

[3] P. 323.

attempting in his essay is to justify the writing of novels *even* if Christianity is true, and that what Mr. Lippmann is attempting in his is to justify American materialism *even* if what he calls "the teaching of the sages" is true. That is why I regard the two essays as comparable.

Mr. Mauriac tries, I say, to justify the writing of novels. He declares that nowadays the novel-reader seeks to discover in a novel the novelist it secretes in order to learn from the novelist's kinship with himself what should be his attitude to life. He declares that those of his own novels which certain people have found most daring are the very novels which have influenced other souls most powerfully in a religious direction. He declares that, provided the novelist is disinterested, and is careful to portray life exactly as it is, without intervening in the destiny of his characters in order to prove or demonstrate, the novel can carry us forward in our knowledge of man.

The arguments are, in themselves, disputable. Can Mr. Mauriac produce a single instance of the disinterested novelist, of the novelist who has succeeded in portraying life exactly as it is? What, in any case, does he mean by: "life exactly as it is"? Let him point to the novel which carries us forward in our knowledge of man. And while, no doubt, people do nowadays obtain part of their attitude to life from novels, if the novelist cannot possibly portray life exactly as it is, and if no novel carries us forward in our knowledge of man, that people do this can only be matter for regret. As for Mr. Mauriac's claim that certain of his novels have influenced human souls in a religious direction, one would, with all respect for his feelings, like to know the precise extent of that influence.

Whether the arguments he advances are sound or not is, however, immaterial. The point is that there cannot, strictly speaking, be any justification of novel-writing if Christianity

is true. Mr. Mauriac mentions how he found that "de très hauts et très saints personnages," to whom he once sought to justify his writing, "ne faisaient aucune différence essentielle entre moi et, par exemple, l'auteur de la Revue des Folies-Bergère,"[4] and concludes that this was because the personages in question had lacked leisure to study the aesthetic problem. But far more likely it was simply because they were aware that the writing of novels cannot, for Christians, be justified. Mr. Mauriac himself shows, to some extent, why.

He says that the imaginative writer must depict the passions, and consequently that the reading of imaginative literature is, for the Christian, fraught with peril. But the peril lurks for the Christian not only in the reading; it lies also, and even more, in the writing. The effect which the writing of novels may have on the novelist Mr. Mauraic neglects to consider. Yet the writer, in order to depict the passions, must, even more than the reader, dwell on those passions in his imagination. Moreover, they are, especially in the case of the psychological novelist, his own passions. "Écrire," Mr. Mauriac says,[5] "c'est se livrer." He admits, too, that "l'artiste, lui, joue son va-tout sur des sentiments, sur des sensations."[6] That is to say, whereas other workers are led to lose themselves in their work, the novelist's task brings him at once back to himself: the very material with which he labours is himself, his feelings, and his sensations. The novelist is ever self-preoccupied, and savours in his egotism an undoubtedly sensual gratification. That is to say, it is an egotism which, for the Christian, is sinful. Hence, the Christian should, for his own sake, even more than for the sake of such others as might read

[4] Pp. 155-6.
[5] P. 69.
[6] P. 125.

him, refrain from novel-writing. And if, after all, he does turn novelist, there can be no justification. All he can say is that, notwithstanding his efforts, his prayers, and his willingness to let Divine Grace operate, he is unable to resist the temptation to write.

In an attenuated form, that is what Mr. Mauriac does say. He declares that the imaginative writer cannot help himself. And if he stopped at that, there would be nothing to which to object. He would have answered Mr. Gide. But he is not content to stop at that. As I say, he insists as well on trying to justify his novel-writing. And such an attempt at justification immediately converts his defence of the charge brought against him by Mr. Gide into a plea of: guilty. For Mr. Gide is not, when he accuses Mr. Mauriac of not losing sight of Mammon, referring to the god of riches, as Mr. Mauriac assumes when he remarks, somewhat bitterly, that it is not enough to say that he has his eye on Mammon: "Tout le monde peut me voir au premier rang de la foule qui l'assiège."[7] Mammon is not only the name of the god of riches; it is also the name of the god of this world. And when Mr. Mauriac insists on trying to justify novel-writing at the same time as he declares Christianity to be true, certainly he is both admitting that his duty is to love God and paying tribute to the god of this world. For him to protest that Mr. Gide is mistaken is of no avail. It was with that that Mr. Gide, in speaking of "ce compromis rassurant qui permette d'aimer Dieu sans perdre de vue Mammon," was precisely charging him.

Mr. Gide's accusation hoisted Mr. Mauriac on the horns of a dilemma. Either he had to justify novel-writing and repudiate Christianity, or he had to hold to Christianity and repudiate novel-writing. In his essay he refuses to accept this

[7] P. 124.

dilemma. He does not repudiate either one or the other. He attempts to stand by both.

Thereby he not only causes judgment to be rendered in favour of Mr. Gide; he attempts the impossible. He attempts to obey the behest of the clergyman, Morell, to the commercial success, Burgess, in Mr. Shaw's play *Candida.* The behest is:

> So long as you come here honestly as a self-respecting, thorough, convinced scoundrel, justifying your scoundrelism, and proud of it, you are welcome.[8]

But while scoundrelism remains scoundrelism, though one may well be a scoundrel — that is only too easy — to justify one's scoundrelism is impossible, and one cannot be proud of it.

Yet it is just because Mr. Mauriac thus attempts the impossible that his essay transcends the minor problem of the novelist's ethics, with which it is ostensibly concerned, and becomes representative of that French movement to emulate America to which I began by referring. For this attempting, as he does in his little book, to justify scoundrelism, and be proud of it, is, I believe, something characteristically American. Of that Mr. Lippmann's essay is an example.

IV

As I have said, Mr. Lippmann's essay appears to me as an attempt to justify American materialism *even* if what he calls "the teaching of the sages" is true. I say: *American* materialism because Mr. Lippmann is an American, as Mr. Mauriac is a novelist: he is an American writing chiefly for Americans. What I mean by: materialism, is no more than this: that he dwells on what he terms "three great phases of human in-

[8] *Plays Pleasant*, p. 93.

terest,"[9] on business, government, and sexual relations; and everywhere, of course, business is undertaken, government discharged, and sex assorted with sex, for material ends. In America, in particular, they are ends summed up by the slogans: Prosperity! and, The Right to be Happy! Prosperity! and, The Right to be Happy! are the twin stars, the Gemini, which can be said to be guiding today the individual American destiny. And the hitching of that destiny to those stars is what Mr. Lippmann attempts to justify.

He attempts to justify it by declaring that what "the Great Society requires for its practical fulfillment"[10] is disinterestedness, and that this disinterestedness is "what we are really driving at in our manifold activity," is "what, rather dimly, we do want."[11] The valuation of human life according to its disinterestedness, "once the possession of an élite, now conforms," he says, "to the premises of a whole civilization." The ideal of disinterestedness is inherent and inevitable in the modern world. In business, in government, and in sexual relations, it is an ideal now implicit and necessary.[12]

What is this ideal of disinterestedness? It is, he says, the ideal of matured personality spoken of by Dr. Freud. Thus, when he says that disinterestedness is now being attained by us individually through our manifold activity, he means, I take it, that our contemporary activity in business, government, and sexual relations, assists us in that progress from infantilism to maturity which is as what the history of each soul should, he says, be regarded.[13] The process of maturing consists for a man in "a revision of his desires in the light of an understanding of reality . . . He begins to see his wishes in

[9] P. 231.
[10] P. 323.
[11] P. 230.
[12] Pp. 230-1.
[13] P. 174.

a context and in perspective."[14] And by understanding reality "we create new objects of desire."[15] We come gradually "to be able to observe our own feelings as if they were objective facts, to detach ourselves from our own fears, hates, and lusts, to examine them, name them, identify them, understand their origin, and finally to judge them."[16]

The arguments by which Mr. Lippmann seeks to show that this ideal of maturity is "inherent and inevitable in the modern world," *i.e.*, seeks to show that the world's activity involved with business, government, and sexual relations, is leading us all individually to attain a Freudian maturity of personality, are extremely ingenious. But they are not convincing. Undoubtedly the alteration of living conditions does result in the production of new objects of desire, but that (a) the magnitude of the great commercial corporations, and their — invariably restricted — socialization (to use Mr. Lippmann's word); (b) the decentralization of government, and its dependence on civic coöperation; and (c) the facilities for controlling births and being frequently divorced, are jointly leading us to change the objects of our desire, so that, for example, we come to reject satisfactions of curiosity of the type, hanging up a cat by its tail, and seek instead satisfactions of curiosity of the type, measuring the diameter of Betelgeuse,[17] there is not the slightest reason, in all he says, to believe. No doubt people in America do, most of them, come through experience to acquire a certain modicum of worldly wisdom, as matured personality was formerly called, but that the conditions of business, government, and sexual relations, there today, assist the acquisition to a greater extent

[14] P. 180.
[15] P. 181.
[16] P. 219.
[17] P. 169.

than conditions elsewhere have assisted it in the past, I can see, and certainly Mr. Lippmann produces, no evidence. Moreover: what is that reality which, he says, we come to understand? What are the ourselves which can, he says, be detached from our own fears, hates, and lusts? Can we indeed come, as he says we can, to understand the origin of our own feelings, or is all we can understand Dr. Freud's theory as to such an origin? These are questions which must all be answered before Mr. Lippmann's thesis can be seriously entertained. No clue to their answer is contained in his book.

Thus, just as, quite apart from the truth or falsity of Christianity, Mr. Mauriac's arguments in justification of novel-writing turn out to be disputable, so, quite apart from whether "the teaching of the sages" is true or false, does Mr. Lippmann's contention that business, government, and the sexual relations, are now exacting from Americans some form of maturity, a certain disinterestedness, turn out to be disputable. But if, so far, the two essays are parallel, they thereupon sharply diverge.

For in attempting to justify novel-writing even if Christianity is true, it never occurs to the French innocence of Mr. Mauriac to misrepresent the nature of Christian dogma. He confines himself to distorting the functions of the novelist and of the novel. But in attempting to justify American materialism even if "the teaching of the sages" is true, Mr. Lippmann is not content with contending that, in pursuing the ends which are pursued in business, government, and sexual relations, Americans are fulfilling an ideal unawares, even as Monsieur Jourdain spoke prose unawares. He must needs also insist that what the pursuit of those ends is producing, and what Dr. Freud means by matured personality, are "high

religion," are the extra-terrestrial disinterestedness of which "the sages" taught. Mr. Mauriac bows down before Mammon, yet he never dreams of identifying Mammon with God. But, for Mr. Lippmann, God *is* Mammon!

V

It may be that the disinterestedness to which Mr. Lippmann's great teachers, Aristotle, the author of the Fourth Gospel, Buddha, and Spinoza,[18] spoke of converting the will, is something illusory. That is a question which need not, on this occasion, be discussed. But, whether what they referred to exists or not, it is quite certain that by disinterestedness they did not mean worldly wisdom, the learning of the lessons of experience.[19] They did not, by a disinterested man, mean a man enabled to live in the land of heart's desire.[20] They did not mean a man seeking to satisfy, with new objects, the same desires that an ordinary man seeks to satisfy[21] — mundane, temporal, and carnal desires, such as may be satisfied in business, government, and sexual relations. They meant a man whose desires themselves had become entirely different from those of the ordinary man. They would have denied that "whatever is righteous is inherently desirable because experience will demonstrate its desirability."[22] Their ideal was not "the ideal way of life for men who must make their own terms with experience and find their own happiness."[23] They did not give devotion to this latter ideal the name of "the religion of the spirit."[24]

Hence, it cannot be true, as Mr. Lippmann says it is, that, thanks to Dr. Freud, and modern psychology in general, "the

[18] P. 194.
[19] P. 181.
[20] P. 151.
[21] P. 181.
[22] P. 137.
[23] P. 326.
[24] P. 327.

world is able at last to take seriously what its greatest teachers have said,"[25] any more than it can be true, as Professor Eddington contends, in *The Nature of the Physical World*, that, because physicists ascribe to the electron uncaused movements, we may now venture to assert the freedom of our own choices.

But not only that. It is evident that, whereas Mr. Mauriac, in his attempt to justify novel-writing even if Christianity is true, is content to falsify the functions of the novelist and of the novel, and never dreams of palming off Christian dogma as what it is not, Mr. Lippmann, in his attempt to justify American materialism even if "the teaching of the sages" is true, is not satisfied with denaturing the materialism, but insists as well on misrepresenting "the teaching of the sages." That is how the American essay is more ingenious and more thorough than the French one.

What Mr. Lippmann terms his insight is, indeed, an example of that sham vision, and what he calls his ideal an example of that mock spirituality, to which Mr. Irving Babbitt refers in the following passage:

> The worst difficulties of the present time arise, I am sometimes tempted to think, even less from lack of vision than from sham vision. Otherwise stated, what is disquieting about the time is not so much its open and avowed materialism as what it takes to be its spirituality.[26]

Moreover, his is a thesis only an American could promote. That is why I have ventured to emphasize that it is American materialism which he is attempting to justify. He begins by declaring that there are those among us "who feel that there is a vacancy in their lives,"[27] and that "it is not possible to be

[25] *ibid.*

[26] *Democracy and Leadership*, pp. 16-7.

[27] P. 3.

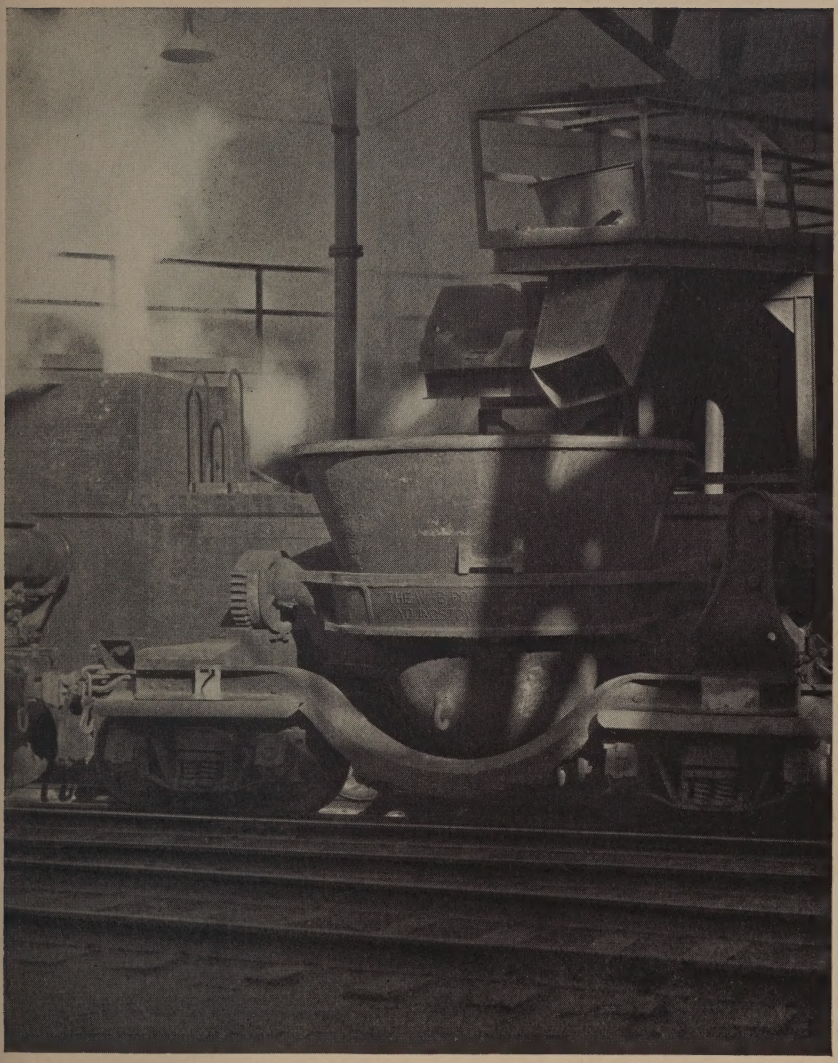
wholly at peace."[28] He ends by saying that, in order to fill the vacancy, and attain peace, we have merely, provided we avail ourselves of the teachings of "modern psychology," to continue along the way we are going! Thus do I find his thesis typically American. It is another example of that American optimism according to which, if we only keep straight on, heaven must be no more than a mile away, and the celestial dawn round the next corner. It is one more sop for Americans' frantic anxiety to be assured that the pursuit of money and sensual enjoyment must be the pursuit of an ideal. It is one more yawp of "Service!"

And if Mr. Lippmann's essay is typically American, no doubt Mr. Mauriac's can be regarded as equally French. In that case, here is, I take it, the lesson to be drawn from comparing the two. France, in displaying with the rest of the world the determination defined by Mr. Julien Benda when he says:[29] "Mankind today displays with an efficiency and a consciousness hitherto unknown its determination to situate itself in the *real* or *practical* mode of existence in contrast to the *disinterested* or *metaphysical* mode," France tends more and more, it would seem, to adopt American methods. But since Mr. Lippmann's essay is, in the sense I have sought to indicate, so much more ingenious and thorough than Mr. Mauriac's, one may conclude that what Matthew Arnold in 1888 said of the United States to the English, "We have a good deal to learn from them," can still be said to the French. It must be an edifying lesson for Americans.

MONTGOMERY BELGION

[28] P. 7.

[29] *La Trahison des Clercs*, p. 50.



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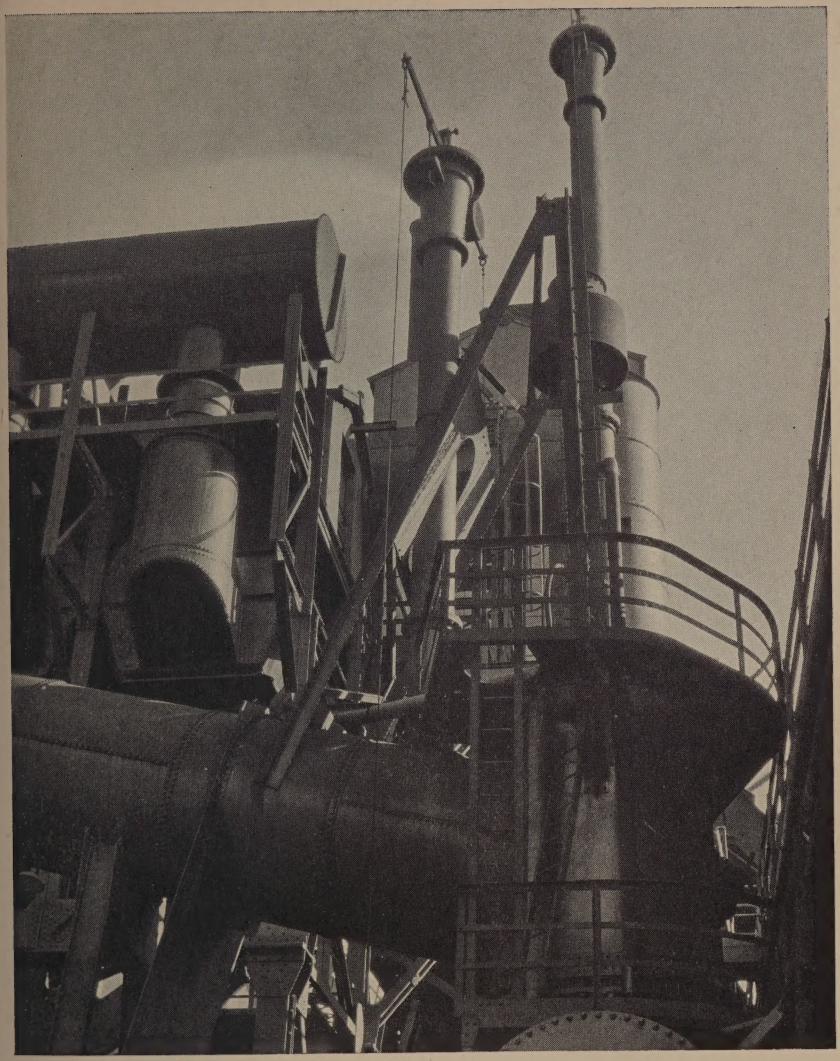

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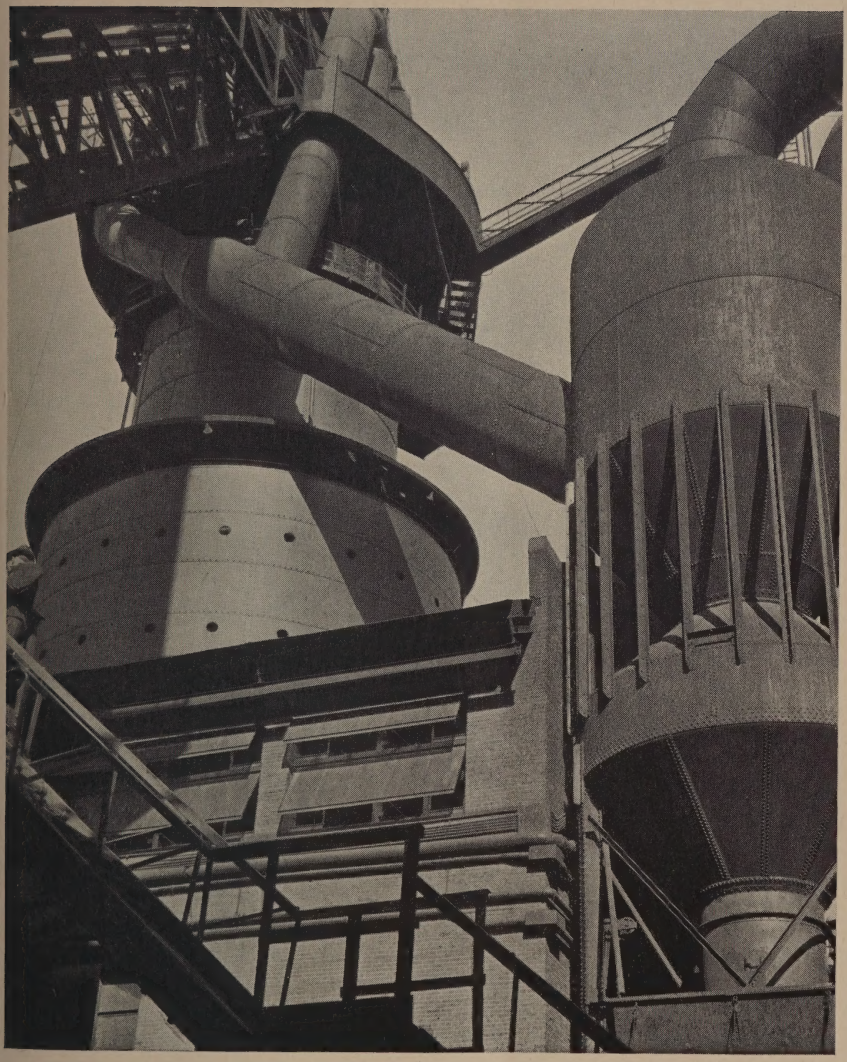

Ford Plant 3 Charles Sheeler

Ford Plant 4 Charles Sheeler

ART CHRONICLE

The "American Note"?

We all trouped into the second exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art hoping to discover at last what American painting was, and we all went away, or at least one of us went away, more confused than before. The painters born in this country were already heterogeneous enough, but it really was troubling to find that the "American artists" also included Pascin, who is *Le Rire* slicked up for snobs, and Kunyoshi, whose wit is as Japanese as Sharaku's. If these are American, then what is — or rather, is anything not — American?

All this sets one to ransacking the past for some, for any, shared and distinguishing preference. In the beginning, Copley and Stuart were as little American as Washington Irving. I see no quality up and down the Hudson River, unless it be a timid dullness. Eakins is different, for he had a flair for awkwardness that is as American as Lincoln. He was probably our only really native portrait painter, but he was self generated and left no posterity. Sargent, like Henry James, showed his Americanism by repulsions rather than by attractions; our insane impermanence drove them both to established titles and old world gardens. This was an acutely American distaste, but where has our painting expressed an American taste? Was it in Winslow Homer, who is certainly alone in having discovered American surroundings that he could accept with gusto? It is significant that these surroundings were almost uninhabited by Americans. If an "American note" should exist, it is not the love of one's neighbors. It was probably our impermanence, as well as disgust with people, that sent Winslow Homer to the forests and the everlastingness of surf, just as the same causes sent Sargent to the hereditary exclusions of Europe.

Must we conclude that dismay is the only native note in our painting? It must be dismay that has prevented the growth of any school of portrait painting (since one Eakins cannot make a school). It disheartens every painter, native or foreign, to face an American. The average American is no more stupid than the men and women that Rembrandt painted, but he is apt to look paper thin because he has no traditional stock of wisdom, no root in any ground. An American face

looks into your face with one suspicion: are you different? It is itself too destitute to afford a difference, or even a secret, let alone the luxury of a passion. Its poverty is envious. In the suburbs at night each uncurtained window glares its electricity into all the surrounding uncurtained windows to make sure that nothing be private, that every emptiness be on display. Panopticon. Panacousticon. And who cares? Certainly no portrait painter.

Whatever does it, the American painter seems to be exiled to landscape, his one retreat. There is his compensation. He becomes acutely sensitive to the expression of a landscape, as though he were studying the only face that would ever be his to love. He stalks and surprises the secret delicacies of nature. John Marin's salt freshness, Burchfield's uncanny sensitiveness to the hour of the day and the lateness or earliness of the month, these are responses unlike those of other schools of landscape painting.

> "Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail
> Whistle about us their spontaneous cry."

Is this, then, the "American note"? And will it stand up beside structure, as Cézanne and Ruysdael practiced it?

THE PEGASUS PRESS

The Pegasus Press* issued its first book some three years ago. In this short time it has already established itself as one of the best, if not the very best, series of books on art. These are not books for specialists. They are for everyone who loves the treasure of the past. Yet this wide appeal does not mean that they are mere re-hashes of old material, for each book must be passed upon by an international committee of some of the soundest scholars of our time, including such men as Berenson, Venturi, Morey, Goldschmidt, etc. Each book is issued in at least three languages: in the language of the author, in English, in French or German, and in Italian or Spanish. The Pegasus Press has secured the coöperation of all Europe for the manufacture of the books: the text is printed in Verona, the plates in Munich or Paris, and they are bound up in Leipzig. The result is far from what most people nowadays mean by "fine books," that is, rag paper and red morocco for wealthy illiterates; the excellence of these books is unobtrusive. The letterpress is handsomely legible, the binding stout, and

the reproductions as exact and luminous as the most modern processes can make them. It is only by the international scope of the series, by using one printing of the plates for editions in several languages that such excellent books can be produced for such moderate prices.

These books are of two kinds: those which extend our knowledge of the past with unpublished photographs and data (like the Oriental books of the series), and those which clarify our views by summarizing scattered researches and making anthologies of monuments, like most of the mediaeval and Renaissance books of the series. It is odd that there should be no books on Greece, Rome or Byzantium. One could wish, for instance, that some really good photographer, such as Clarence Kennedy of Smith, could be got to photograph the masterpieces of archaic sculpture that are lost in the provincial museums of Greece.

The Pegasus Press has already secured M. Capart to perform such a service for Egypt, in a series of five volumes which is to publish photographs of Egyptian works (most of them in private collections and small museums) until sufficient material shall be gathered to make a history of Egyptian art possible. The first volume of these sumptuous plates has already sold out. Does that indicate that we are at last discovering the delicate, almost secret adjustments of Egyptian art?

The two volumes of *Early Indian Sculpture* publish enough new photographs to change one's ideas of the subject. The Greek Ghandara sculptures are presented as unimportant and late, no longer as the unique link between sculpture in the West and sculpture in the East. The dates are still too confused to be sure of much, despite the author's labors to fix them. Bachhofer has tried to criticize from a sculptor's point of view. The aim is praiseworthy, but calls for a more instinctive feeling for the craft than he possesses. Indian sculpture from 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. surprises one with its feeling for the body, a sane exuberance, and a voluptuous vigor which is the strangest mood for illustrating the life of Buddha.

Just as this book alters our view of Indian sculpture by fitting the few pieces that we knew into the mass of recent discoveries, so also *The Islamic Book* sheds a new light on the familiar Persian and Moghul miniatures by showing their ancestors, the scraps of early Arabic books newly recovered from the rubbish heaps of Egypt. The

many illustrations of intricate geometric bindings are full of suggestions for any practicing bookbinder. Sir Thomas Arnold's part of the introduction is most charmingly written, full of quaint anecdotes translated out of old manuscripts. He unfortunately never refers to the illustrations, which makes it difficult to coördinate them with the text.

Kingsley Porter's *Spanish Romanesque Sculpture* is another book which publishes a mass of new things. Mr. Porter has carried his cameras and his stepladders into inaccessible retreats of Spain and has brought back photographs of wonderful mediaeval remains, many whose very names have been forgotten for centuries. For studying sculpture, a book like this is better than actual travel, for there is no need to wish oneself on stilts to see the capitals, no peerings into vaults with candles. The illustrations are so beautiful, and the whole book is so warm with the gusto of a hunter for his trophies, that it is mean to doubt Mr. Porter's conviction that Spain gave the Romanesque to France and Italy. Conjectural as all that must remain in the absence of further data, the plates alone of this book make it indispensable for an architect, or for any lover of the Romanesque. A good part of the introduction is devoted to the origins of the Romanesque, going back to the end of the Roman Empire. This is one of the most baffling ages of Europe, what with its Armenian bishops in Scandinavia, its unexplained connections between Ireland and Egypt. It is to be hoped that the book on *Italian Painting before Giotto*, which Mr. Berenson has promised to the Pegasus Press, will throw more light on this time, for almost no other is so worth investigating.

The two books on French Gothic sculpture fill a very different need. Two or three generations of French scholars have searched out and arranged this material. The period of discovery is past; it is time for selection and right emphasis, and these two anthologies have been prepared with skill and taste. The text is concise and accurate, the photographs excellently chosen and clearly arranged for comparison. One can measure the superiority of the Pegasus Press reproductions by comparing Houvet's photographs of Chartres as they appear in these books with the same ones as they appear in Houvet's own books. The gain is surprising. M. Vitry's introduction annoys one somewhat by criticizing early Gothic sculpture from a naturalistic standpoint, instead of regarding it from the standpoint of a sculptor who is trying to

serve architecture. This section of the series will be completed by the publication of *The Romanesque Sculpture of France* by Paul Deschamps.

The aim of these three books is similar to the aim of the two on *German Illumination*, which offer a wonderful collection of miniatures that have appeared only in stray monographs and in books now difficult to obtain. Some of these German illuminations are the most disconcerting works of the Middle Ages. St. Augustine's thunderbolt of grace seems to have struck off its very liveliest sparks at Reichenau. These illuminations could supply a generation of stained glass makers with designs. These two books are the most conveniently arranged of all the Pegasus Press, since the entire data for each illustration is printed right on its protecting tissue paper. Adolf Goldschmidt is the great authority on German manuscripts, and his two introductions are admirable summaries of half a century of scattered researches.

The book on *English Illumination* does not benefit by a similar accumulation of research, and the text is necessarily far less authoritative. The Irish and Anglo-Saxon illuminations are well represented, but the Gothic ones not so fully. And how, indeed, should they be, when the riches of the very Bodleian are not yet thoroughly known, let alone the private libraries? (Only four or five years ago the Bodleian discovered that it had owned for generations the earliest known illustrated MS of Dante.) The book on English wall paintings is less interesting, for the walls have preserved only from a late period, and imperfectly, what the illuminations have preserved from all periods and freshly. These frescos have had to be represented by water color copies, either because the light was bad for photographing them or because they were so effaced. This is a pity, since much of their original fragrance must evaporate in transfusion. The book is interesting, although one cannot help thinking that these soft and florid murals are mere lagging dependencies of French and Flemish painting. One always closes an English book about English antiquities with the feeling that it was all very good fun, but a little helter skelter; that parochial pieties have blinded the authors to general views.

One does not find this fault with Venturi's admirable account of *Giovanni Pisano*. It is compact, orderly and complete so far as our present knowledge goes. There is also a good appreciation of this dramatic sculptor, who would have been so much more at home in

Bernini's time. It is a pity that Venturi's well prepared text should receive but perfunctory illustration from Alinari's stock photographs. It is, of course, far more difficult to take a good picture of sculpture than of painting, for the photographer must study his statue from all angles, under all the shifting lights of the day, and sometimes he must wait for a winter or a summer sun, as Houvet often had to do at Chartres. Good photography of sculpture stands out by its rarity; there is Houvet's work at Chartres, Walter Hege's at Naumburg, and a few Greek photographs (for the most part unpublished) by Clarence Kennedy. It is a pity that there is no one with as good an eye for lighting and detail working for any of the great photographing firms of Europe.

Pietro Toesca's book on *Trecento Painting in Florence* is in many respects the masterpiece, so far, of the Pegasus Press. One has but to look through the illustrations to see what a fresh light he has cast upon that hackneyed subject. His choice of details to be photographed has brought out hidden aspects of Giotto. I had always imagined that Giotto deliberately drained his faces of expression in order to charge the whole body with a kind of emotional static. These plates show that on the contrary, the faces are expressive all alone. Over half the illustrations are of Giotto's work. The text also centres on him, his origins and the partition of his legacy to painting. Toesca never once allows himself to be distracted into attributing third rate paintings to fourth rate "masters," that dissipation that has turned the criticism of Italian art into a quibbling kind of parlor game. He has brought all his powers to focus on masterpieces that are so familiar that we have ceased to see them. He has then given their background and their context. The result is a revelation where it was least to be expected. The Pegasus Press promises another book by him on *Florentine Painting of the Quattrocento.*

It is a pity that there is no second Toesca to give order and emphasis to the three other books on later Italian painting. Corrado Ricci's study of *North Italian Painting of the Cinquecento* was needed, but the writing is diffuse and the ideas without focus. Fifty-five artists are represented in eighty-four plates, and the result is confusing, although they share a certain dreadful family likeness, since they are all Leonardo's bastards. The book on *Venetian Painting of the Seicento and the Settecento* is the only work that falls conspicuously below the

standard of the Pegasus Press. The introduction is oratorical and misinformed. One is astonished to read that Tintoretto "never made sketches," and that "Magnasco . . . was the forerunner of half of Goya's work and of more than half of Daumier's," when it is most doubtful if they ever heard his name. It would have been wiser to confine the book to Venetian painting of the Settecento, from Piazzetta to Guardi, let us say, and leave out the Seicento that so monotonously echoes Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. Aldo de Rinaldis' book on *Neapolitan Painting of the Seicento* throws an amusing light on the operatic exuberance of the time, its gusto for illuminated clouds and trombones and dungeons. These three books mark the change of taste that has come since the war, the revival of the Baroque.

The book of Tiepolo drawings is one of the happiest and freshest in all the Pegasus Press. Baron von Hadeln has written the briefest introduction possible in order to make room for about twice the usual number of plates. Tiepolo's paintings delight one with their athletic ease, but his drawings much more so. Tiepolo had launched himself into the inmost beat of the eighteenth century, where all is billowed aloft on gusts of pleasure, all is sunlight and ascensions and suspensions.

The Baroque Architecture of Prague is another delightful book. It shows the city as old residents know it, takes one to attic windows that look across a jumble of tiles and weedy cornices and old stone urns whose carved flames moulder under mosses, it unlocks the walls of steep gardens, where vines cascade about the struggling caryatids. All the Baroque is there, with its freezing magnificence and its logic of irrelevance. There is only one blemish to the book: the plates do not print clearly on the handmade paper.

This is the present list of the Pegasus Press. It is adding books all the time, and promises excellent things for the future, such as Toesca on *Quattrocento Painting in Florence*, Berenson on *Italian Painting before Giotto*, and Charles Vignier on *Oriental Art*. The books are naturally of varying merit, but the board of editors have in every case chosen the man best suited to each task. Few art books endure; they become antiquated almost as fast as books of science. Yet in this series there are a number that come as near as possible to being definitive and that will remain useful, and some of them essential, for years to come.

A. Hyatt Mayor

*Documents pour Servir à l'Étude de l'Art Egyptien. By Jean Capart. Vol. I. $90.

Early Indian Sculpture. By Ludwig Bachhofer. About 100 pages of text and 161 plates. 2 vols. $63.

The Islamic Book. By Sir Thomas Arnold & A. Grohmann. About 130 pages of text and 104 plates (10 in color). $63.

Spanish Romanesque Sculpture. By A. Kingsley Porter. 200 pages of text and 160 plates. 2 vols. $63.

Gothic Sculpture in France (1150-1225). By Marcel Aubert. 120 pages of text and 88 plates. $31.50.

Gothic Sculpture in France (1225-1270). By Paul Vitry. 120 pages of text and 90 plates. $31.50.

German Illumination (Carolingian Period). German Illumination (Ottonian Period). By Adolf Goldschmidt. Each about 140 pages of text and 100 plates. Each vol. $31.50.

English Illumination. By O. Elfrida Saunders. 130 pages of text and 129 plates. 2 vols. $56.

English Mediaeval Painting. By Tancred Borenius and E. W. Tristram. 75 pages of text and 101 plates. $31.50.

Giovanni Pisano. By Adolfo Venturi. 70 pages of text and 120 plates. $42.

Florentine Painting of the Trecento. By Pietro Toesca. 82 pages of text and 119 plates. $42.

North Italian Painting of the Cinquecento. By Corrado Ricci. 80 pages of text and 84 plates. $31.50.

Venetian Painting of the Seicento & the Settecento. By Giuseppe Fiocco. 97 pages of text and 88 plates. $31.50.

Neapolitan Painting of the Seicento. By Aldo de Rinaldis. 80 pages of text and 81 plates. $31.50.

The Drawings of Tiepolo. By Detlev von Hadeln. 35 pages of text and 200 plates. 2 vols. $63.

Baroque Architecture of Prague. By E. Dostal and J. Sima. About 30 pages of text and 156 plates. $35.

MUSIC CHRONICLE

Some Practical Difficulties of Musical Criticism

The critic of music labors under greater disadvantages than the critic of any other art. He addresses himself primarily to the music-lover, rather than to the musician; and between these two there is a gap far wider than that which separates, for example, the lover of poetry from the poet. For a person may enjoy music keenly, and have pronounced tastes and powers of discrimination, and still be the equivalent of a complete illiterate, who not only can neither read nor write, but being ignorant of the rules of pronunciation and grammar, cannot even trust himself to speak. Again, the art-critic, writing for the benefit of the art-lover, rather than for that of the painter or sculptor, is not so severely handicapped as the critic of music. For he can describe a painting as fully as he chooses, from its general arrangement of color and form, down to the smallest detail. The reader has only to look attentively at the reproduction on the opposite page, or at the original, if available, in order to follow him step by step through his analysis. Better still, the critic of painting can describe in plain language, and be understood. He can speak of one patch of yellow balancing another, and lines or "movements" converging to a certain point, etc.

But the music critic may not describe in plain language. If he wishes to point out some passage in a symphony, the significance of which would be likely to escape the average listener, he has no equivalent to such matter-of-fact terms as "a patch of yellow," or "a point at which such and such lines meet." He must clothe his account in vague metaphorical language, devoid of simplicity or precision; in short, try to make his meaning clear in terms that may well suggest something different to everybody. Thus, suppose one wished to call attention to a certain very beautiful entrance of the 'cello in the slow movement of Mozart's G minor String Quintet. If one said: "After two measures' rest the 'cello enters on a G-flat in the bass, delaying the subsequent cadence in B-flat major by giving, with the C-flat in the treble (Neapolitan sixth become sub-dominant) the fleeting impression of affirming the key of G-flat" — who but a trained musician would recognize this passage when he heard it? If, on the other

hand one described it in some such manner as this: "Mozart seldom cared to sustain a mood of unrelieved anguish. The mournful descending phrases on the violin, each one a deeper sigh than the last, seem to presage the declaration of some unbearable grief. But nothing of the sort follows. Instead, the sombre accompaniment of repeated chords all at once ceases; the melody retains its plaintive character, but we feel it, as it were, timidly plucking at our sleeve, as though to lead us into sunnier paths. The 'cello is silent for a brief interval, and then enters once more, on a note deep in the bass, which is held with sustaining tenderness throughout the measure. It seems to arrive as a kind of grave parental sanction to the timid suggestion just made by the violin—and what intimations does it not hold of the smiling landscape about to be spread before us!" It is not unlikely that the reader will be better able to recognize the G-flat entrance of the 'cello from this description than from the other. At all events he has been prepared for it in the only way possible in such a case: that is, by a series of emotional and sensory suggestions arranged in dramatic sequence. Everything but the sequence is essentially arbitrary. The principal aim was to throw the 'cello's entrance into relief. But the music itself has hardly a more necessary connection with these particular suggestions than have the objects in a game of make-believe with what they symbolize in a child's mind; — when a book may become an automobile, and a sprig of leaves a person, who drives to an armchair called London. The evocative power of music is such that a mere shred of plausibility often suffices to give a "story," woven around some purely musical sequence, an air of seeming aptness.

The honest critic can only hope that where his object is attained — that simply, in the case I am considering, of bringing out the significance of a passage in such a way as to make it possible for the untrained but sensitive listener to identify it — the latter will dissociate what he hears from all this superposed "program" and listen only to the sounds. For except in certain vocal and dramatic forms, the evocative power of music is *auxiliary*. Its intrinsic power requires no image to heighten it, since its full quality is defined in the sounds themselves.

But to the critic, as I have tried to show, this evocative power is indispensable. Without it he would be on the horns of a dilemma; thanks to it he can be carried more or less comfortably between them. For what chiefly complicates his task is the fact that nearly everyone is

familiar with the pure expressive qualities of music, for which no exact equivalent in words can be found; but only the trained musician is familiar with its formal aspects: harmonies, proportions, technical procedures, etc., for which there are accepted symbols. The kind of paraphrase attempted on the passage from Mozart's Quintet suggests what is perhaps the nearest approach to a solution of the problem: namely a compromise between what cannot be defined at all, and what can be accurately described only in terms that will be meaningless to the uninitiated. The practical test of its validity is whether or not it succeeds in sharpening the listener's attention, in preparing him for a more detailed (or, as may be, a broader) understanding of a composition. Theoretically, it is justified when the imagery employed fulfills a double purpose: that is, when it not only *suggests* the indefinable expression of the music, but also paraphrases the exact symbols describing some formal aspect of it. Either purpose can be fulfilled thanks only to the music's evocative power: another paraphrase, in which totally different images were used, might do as well or better.

It is evidently almost impossible for criticism of this kind to be based on the experience of a few hearings of a work. The critic's reactions may, broadly speaking, be "sound" enough, but unless he is one of those supremely gifted musicians, with an ear that promptly perceives the chemistry of everything it hears, and a memory that retains it all, the images he employs in the discussion and defense of a judgment more or less casually formed will be impressionistic and incomplete. They will suggest only the effect the music has had upon him, and will lack the objective validity that would accrue to them through being also a paraphrase of the terms in which the music was to be strictly analyzed.

THEODORE CHANLER

THEATRICAL CHRONICLE

The New York Stage and Some Recent Revues

It is a little hard to see what business a quarterly has to concern itself with the American, which is actually the New York stage. New York is the world's largest market for theatrical goods; it buys the products of every country, every class and every clique; but so far it has itself shown little more than commercial enterprise. New York will patronize Noel Coward, Rheinhardt, the Chauve Souris, Copeau, or the Moscow Art Theatre; it will support talent developed in provincial vaudeville circuits, and produce folk plays from North Carolina or Oklahoma, and yet it cannot grow anything of its own. The revue is its characteristic form. *The Little Show* is one of the very best of recent revues. Clifton Webb, its leading man, owes his lightness and ease to the fact that he is an Englishman, and his dancing to his studies in American tap, with most probably experience on the vaudeville stage. Libby Holman is a voice and a blues mood. She is middle western influenced by Harlem. She is authentically theatrical and American, but she owes none of this to New York. *The Little Show* has more gusto and originality, as well as a better trained chorus, than *Wake Up and Dream,* the current Charles B. Cochran production from London. The latter has a more light and easy tone, and is more consistently sophisticated. Both of them owe their success to talent which they neither discovered nor developed. *Wake Up and Dream* utilizes several South American dancers, several German dancers, a French costumier, a Bostonian musician. Its significance is limited to the economic fact of getting them all together for this one show. It establishes nothing capable of enduring for a few years. At most it is interesting as an indication of metropolitan taste, and of the conditions under which the theatre precariously exists. A quarterly has no business to try to keep up with the many-headed show business, like the reviewers on the daily papers, for the New York stage as a whole is as unstable and as sterile as a revue. But it may sample the diet from time to time, and so get an idea of what we should have to overcome before we had a theatre.

It is on this principle that this department will be conducted. There

will be no attempt to cover the season, or even all the major hits. It will briefly describe a few shows, picked almost at random. If they show any hopeful symptoms we shall not hesitate to applaud. But our chief interest in them will be to try to see through them to the conditions, economic, sociological, or cultural, which make them what they are.

THE RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

Since Morris Gest imported the Moscow Art Theatre and the Chauve Souris there has been a Russian Racket. For a time the Chauve Souris was the last word in sophisticated entertainment, and the name of the Moscow Art Theatre stood for some kind of revelation or new theatrical gospel. Perhaps for this reason the Guild calls its production of *Red Rust* experimental. This play from Bolshevik Russia is a sufficiently sincere picture of that regime, containing some scenes toward the end which have a kind of nightmarish, adolescent intensity. The acting and directing reminded one of the last years of the Provincetown: barbarous diction, untrained voices and bodies, and a conviction that to be strong you have to bellow. But while the speech at the Provincetown used to be provincial — middle western or rural Pennsylvania — the speech in *Red Rust* is preponderantly Bronx. The whole occasion had the unpleasant flavor of a children's party in a rich and vulgar mansion. But the Guild subscribers were interested in a picture of the Bolsheviks and pleasurably shocked by hearing profanity pronounced from the stage with great gusto.

At the same time Mr. Bulgakov and his group were reviving Gorki's *Lower Depths,* in a new translation called *At The Bottom.* The translation had the amusing and pithy crispness of American slang, given further point and "pep" by the unmistakably United States accents of the cast, which was as miscellaneous and hardly better trained than that of *Red Rust.* The contrast between this joyful and familiar language and the play itself, which is of a humanitarian, Tolstoyan, pseudo-primitive-Christian tinge, was very curious indeed. The production itself: business, sets, and costumes, was a faithful copy of the Moscow Art Theatre production. One of the most telling effects in the play is an off-stage fight between two women, which reaches a climax when one of the women is carried on stage maimed, in the midst of a large mob. All the main cues and timing in this mob scene were exactly reproduced, so exactly that they could be rec-

ognized by one in the audience who was very familiar with the original staging. This being true, it is impossible to say whether Mr. Bulgakov has anything of interest or not. It is fairly easy to copy some one else's direction. He certainly displays no very formidable originality. It is safe to say that this is not the way to utilize the discoveries of the Moscow Art Theatre. They developed a most deep and thorough technique of acting and directing, which may be learned in a period of years; but neither their taste, which is Russian and prewar, nor their actual productions, which belong by right to their creators, have anything to do with us.

Last year Miss Le Gallienne produced the *Cherry Orchard*, and it seems worth while to recall that production in this connection. She had Nazimova with her at that time, and she gave a beautiful Madame Ranevsky. Miss Le Gallienne was probably led to the play neither because of Nazimova nor because of the Russian Racket, but simply by the desire to add this play to her repertory. Miss Le Gallienne is interested in good plays; she is not interested in new plays, nor in new aspects of old plays. The acting at her theatre is unexciting; she directs as little as possible. In her modest aim of being a dollar classics series of the theatre she is entirely successful, and is repaid by the gratitude and the support she deserves. But it is important to define her limitations. In a society whose culture, as we have so often heard, is in the hands of its women; for a merchant city during a period of intellectual torpor, she does admirably. But with her comfortable atmosphere, as of a good old book and a deep chair; with her charming, appreciative and incredulous ease, she is emphatically not to be regarded as the white hope of the American stage.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

CORRESPONDENCE

AND THE REMAINDER

"One person out of every twenty-two in New York state spends a certain period in an insane asylum."

Paris edition of an American daily paper.

The mania of America (in the abstract) and of anglosaxons in general for choosing the second best, for getting Howells instead of H. James (et similiter . . .) is to the present author in moments of idleness (i.e. during those fifteen scattered days per annum when having finished one job he has not yet started another) a matter of recurrent (be it confessed) petty annoyance.

Mr. Rutter for example is far from the worst art critic in England. There are not more than three painters in England whose work cd. be hung beside "the old masters" without causing sensations leading ultimately to thought on the decadence of the race. Mr. Rutter in his *Evolution of Modern Art* reproduces a painting by Wyndham Lewis which easily indicates Lewis' position as first of this possible triad; he then reproduces a composition by Mrs. Dod Proctor which is pure Tate Gallery camouflaged by the slightest possible topwash of diluted cubation.

As America does not produce or at any rate does not publish critical works dealing with contemporary art or music one observes that the most interesting prose authors who have appeared since the publication of *Ulysses* do NOT have their volumes printed in America. In one case even though the novel had its latter parts serialized in the states it has gone to England (dead and decrepit ole England) to be published in book form. *Ulysses* also was serialized in America but its nonappearance there as a volume was due not to the cretinism of American publishers but to a law obviously framed by baboons for the further stultification of idiots. This law (together with several others indicating the complete unfitness of the murkn peepul to govern themselves) is (and are) needless to state, still on the statute books or in whatever secret drawers and inaccessible compartments the present

Hardingized-Coolidgized bureaucracy keeps its red string fish hooks.

For the honour of American publishing (such as it is) I must however record that I heard Horace Liveright offer Joyce a thousand dollars advance on a single edtn. of the book at a time when it hadn't the chance of a snowball in hell of being publishable in Manhattan.

For the rest the process of Howells-for-James; the process of getting Amygism for Imagism; the casting of a pale Lowelization on all things (Tate-Galleryism in England) continues in both the great anglosaxon blubocracies.

A certain number of locally and academically "eminent" are placed on the judging seats; the impossibility of their ever attaining an international position is never discussed, is never even suggested; the process of keeping America twenty years behind the critical position of pore ole Yourup goes on like a slow moving quagmire. One injects certain fragments of knowledge that ought to move the hands forward across the dial's face; the assininity of an earlier generation slowly recedes and at the end of the process one observes that the time consumed in the operation is exactly the fifteen or twenty years that measured one's own handicap fifteen or twenty years earlier.

Scribner's prints Callighan and not McAlmon. Of course they ought to print Callighan; The Guggenheim Foundation is conceived on "very broad lines," it recognizes, in principle, that its effectiveness depends on its choice of candidates *but* it refuses George Antheil with editorial circumlocution. And the meaning of this sentence will not be clear either to the Guggenheim committee or to the select American public for another five or ten years. The details change (Antheil will enter his native America via Frankfurt) but the fundamental equation remains the same.

The first support Antheil had in America, apart from the interest of Bloch and von Sternberg, came from ploot who insisted on his becoming a PYanist. That is perhaps typical, not only of Pennsylvania but of the whole damned and doddering anglosaxon coagulation in general; offered a composer they ask for a pyanist; offered a great master of design they ask for a pamphleteer or (at least in the case of P. Wyndham Lewis) the manifest hate and opposition only ceases and the enthusiastic reception only begins when the creative master makes a detour into pamphleteering; not that they understand the pamphlets but they get a phrase here and there and don't feel that

they are in the presence of something devastatingly more permanent than themselves and their particular cliché of inanity.

Whether any generally effective serum can be devised to cure this nastiness in our nation? That is to say: must we reread the life of Napoleon to discover his great discovery namely that: artillery to be effective must be aimed toward what you want to hit? I, alas, leave it to the reader.

A will to stimulate the arts is manifest in several American foundations; i.e., the money has been paid but this is ineffective, and will be, until more care is taken in examining the qualifications of the selecting committees. Certain mechanisms wd. be useful if . . . .

For instance, less than a million dollars wd. purchase an uptodate printing press and pay the annual salaries of three or four printers; and this press cd. be used to further communication between the intelligent or at least between the mentally alert citizens of the republic, IF the selection of matter to be printed were confided to a dozen men who had each, apart from personal talent, shown a capacity for discovery of, and interest in, some notable contemporary work save his own. These men wd. act independently of each other and NOT as a committee; they wd. each have the right of nominating one or two books, pamphlets; or fragments a year. The subsidy wd. not enable the foundation to undersell the "trade" but it wd. make the editors independent of immediate sales and provide contemporary (really contemporary) publications for the few hundred Americans who want them.

It might be noted that whole categories of European books simply do not exist in America. The whole category of critical writings; volumes of 150 to 250 pages sold for 50 or 60 cents in France and Germany is unknown in either America or England.

The island of Pelman produces (fifteen or thirty years late) a genre called "series," i.e., superficial sumaries of what has occurred in art or letters or science or some branch of same and sells it at 2 shillings and six pence; but this is aimed at the upper tiers of Daily Mail reader and is of no use to either writer or scientist.

The whole category of writers like Cocteau, Aragon, DeSchloezer, in fact the whole literate section of Europe that makes the advance reviews and sees its work immediately reprinted in handy cheap volumes is either nonextant in America or depends for inter-

communication on fortuitous "freak" publications; or is forced to back up its free speculation by a cannonade of scholasticism and in any case does not for at least a decade or two attain existence in book-form.

What accommodation has America for an Apollinaire; a Picabia, a Man Ray, or a Marcel Duchamp. Admitting that one or two of these gents occasionally visits Manhattan as an anonymous and diverted spectator.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the best of America (in the intellectual sense) may be concealed in college faculties, a country can not rely *wholly* for its mental life on a set of men constantly and almost exclusively in contact with younger men who know less than they do. Perhaps one professor in every 1500 survives. There must be a non-academic element in contemporary mental activity (and it should not be wholly ignorantist).

These cheap books which men write for their equals do not sell by the million or even by the ten thousand in France. Books of the same sort in our own tongue have been printed in France and England without fiscal disaster, though they do not permit any great "overhead." In America even books that are practically certain to pay their printing costs and a little over, are held up; there is the competition not of the worthless, but of the second-rate that will pay dividends. The publishers can't afford to wait for a slow return. The subsidizer is daft on putting steam heat into freshman dormitories. A good printing press probably costs no more than a single heating installation.

As for coöperation? a syndicat des intellectuels? as for any idea of the mentally alert cataloguing themselves, posting up a bulletin to the effect: We want to be informed when it happens. We are not the garment-workers but we have a few interests in common, or uncommon?

This, I suppose, lies outside the national genius. (There wd. also be the annual dues to deter people, 50 cents to five bucks per annum.)

EZRA POUND

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
Sirs:[1]

Sometime I wish you would ask your wise man, Mr. Hicks, to state his competence to decide what in a piece of writing is derived from Gurdjieff and what is not. On this matter he appears to follow the judgment of Mr. Cowley who "discovered" Gurdjieff in my book and in Mr. Toomer's piece. But Mr. Cowley's almost total ignorance of the Gurdjieff[2] system of ideas and his disposition to trust to his prejudices rather than to take the trouble to inform himself as to what the ideas are, are well known in New York. The man who sees in Mr. Toomer's Nathan Antrum a disciple of Gurdjieff plainly does not know what he is talking about. The point of Mr. Toomer's projected novel, *York Beach*, was precisely to show the struggle of a character to solve the problem of the individual and democracy *without* benefit of the Gurdjieff ideas. In view of this, I cherish no hope that even on the third time Mr. Hicks reviews *Style and Form*, he will be able correctly to specify the Gurdjieff elements in my alleged "melange of Babbitt, Orage and Gurdieff (sic)." As a matter of fact, I carefully excluded Gurdjieff elements, and what Mr. Hicks fames to be them is probably only ordinary common sense. If to a cocksure reader, the book appears to be a melange, he had better say Aristotle, Saintsbury, Orage and Behaviorism.

You understand, of course, that this letter is not entered in controversy with Mr. Hicks. But I presume that you, as editor, have some interest in the accuracy of your reviewing.

Faithfully yours,

GORHAM B. MUNSON

[1] *Balm in Gilead.* Review of the American Caravan by Granville Hicks. HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, No. 2.

[2] Mr. Cowley at least knows better than Mr. Hicks how to spell Gurdjieff.

To the Editors
THE HOUND & HORN
Sirs:[1]

The most recent influx to the stream of commentary on "Ulysses," Mr. S. Foster Damon's essay, "The Odyssey in Dublin" (HOUND & HORN, Fall, 1929), partakes in full measure of the ethical confusion of James Joyce's work. In his interpretation of "Ulysses," Mr. Damon does not suggest that Joyce's theory of Hamlet may be exotic, that there may be any incongruity in the use of Dante, that the Bloom-Christ representation may be the defaming of a great figure, or that the entire symbolism may be top-heavy and grotesque. Is it necessary to point out that Joyce is subjecting religious and literary ideas to the Procrustean bed of his own painfully difficult situation, and that he is unjustifiably treating his own struggles as the consummation of all significant effort in the occident? But Joyce's outlook seems not to be sufficiently robust to represent such grand and balanced comprehensiveness. For "Ulysses" is undoubtedly the work of a genius, but of a sadly unsound genius.

Throughout Mr. Damon's criticism and interpretation of "Ulysses" runs a disastrous fallacy, namely the failure to appreciate the intimate relation of the *whole* conduct and thought of an individual to the state of his "soul." It is startling to be told by Mr. Damon that Bloom is symbolic of Christ. In the same essay he can write that "Bloom is the complete misfit of all literature" (page 32). Some writers have described Bloom as "l'homme moyen sensuel." He performs kindnesses which anyone can testify to having experienced from such men. Yet it seems extravagant on this account to set up Bloom as the complete symbol of the Christ-like virtues. Mr. Damon contrasts the vices of Stephen, who is for him the personification of Satan, with the virtues of Bloom, which are unconvincingly represented as those of Christ. How then, under any intellectual dispensation at all, can he conclude that when Bloom "sees Stephen, he recognizes in him at once his ideal" (page 35). Christ recognizes Satan as his "ideal." Satan (Stephen) is seeking his father, Christ (Bloom). Christ and Satan meet at last and recognize each other as true father and son. And "the way of Satan and the way of Christ lead alike to

[1] *The Odyssey in Dublin.* By S. Foster Damon. THE HOUND & HORN, Vol. III, No. 2.

futility and despair" (page 38). Bloom does service not only for Christ but for Ulysses also: "Bloom is Ulysses, the wanderer, in search of his home, his wife, his son" (page 35). Stephen "incarnates all that Bloom wished his son to be" (page 35). "Paradise is the soul of Hell" (page 43). "When he is drunk and hungry, driven crazy by the phantom of his mother, and knocked senseless in the street, suddenly to his lips come fragments of the song [which he used to sing to his mother]; and we know that the real Stephen is among the deathless gods, singing to the mother from whom he has never been parted" (page 43).

Merely to state such a patent confusion of ideas is to expose their obvious falsity. The ramified symbolism and the incongruous collocation of ideas which Mr. Damon offers as a serious treatment of the problem of evil seems to give the impression of the existence of a mass of evil, but gives no adequate conception of the good which is to combat this evil. Perhaps it is this inadequacy which forces Mr. Damon to conclude that the struggle of good and evil is "futile."

Yours truly,

LOUIS HARAP

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FROG WHO WOULD BE AN OX

THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY. *A Memoir. By John T. Morse, Jr. Boston and New York. Houghton Mifflin Company. The Riverside Press, Cambridge.* 1929. $3.50.

Selections from the Letters of THOMAS SERGEANT PERRY. *Edited with an introduction, by Edwin Arlington Robinson. New York. The Macmillan Company.* 1929. $3.00.

In 1887 the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin, inventor of America; the grandson of Commodore Perry, victor of the Battle of Lake Erie; the nephew of Commodore Perry, hero of Japan; the brother-in-law of John LaFarge, the most humane American decorator; the husband of Lilla Cabot, the most robust painter of the Boston school, when he had attained to his forty-third year published an accurate and exhaustive work, though neither dull nor long, which is entitled *The Evolution of the Snob.* I have not read the book for fifteen years, yet it lives in my memory, and I take this to be in its favor. Ten years ago, when Van Wyck Brooks, referring to his correspondence with the man who introduced Russian literature to the English speaking world and Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* to the American public, asked me did I know him, I was able to reply only that I knew of him as the husband of his poetic, artistic wife. The knowledge of Brooks and my ignorance, each has its significance. John Addington Symonds wrote to Edmund Gosse "When you go to Boston, you will see Perry, one of the most bright-souled students of literature, the biggest *helluo liborum* in America. Salute him for me." In 1925 Perry wrote of himself "I, whose identity is lost so utterly that I receive letters addressed to Thomas Cabot, Esq., I, who have drunk so deep a draught from the chalice of ignominy, have been asked to send to an unknown

man — perhaps a fond, almost silent admirer — *my autograph.*"

There may be some formula in Physics for the dissipation of energy which would stand to the public and to his friends as a symbol for Thomas Sergeant Perry. A man in whom the natural forces of his ancestral heritage played about for more than eighty years, a man widely read and widely known, who knew much and wrote well, and yet a man who, after a good beginning in scholarly letters, permitted himself to be so embittered by the ill fortune which emanates from the evil genius of Harvard College that the spite and stupidity of others entered into him and paralyzed his will to the end that he lived for forty years half disgruntled, half content to be a fashionable crank, such a man is a subject for review, fit to the abilities of T. S. Eliot or Van Wyck Brooks. We are not given his letters to these masters of criticism. You are not given a review of him by one of his admirers and friends; but instead, a review by one who knew him not.

Oh, in one way, I knew him well. I know his Ka. For I feel that it was he, more even than his powerful intimates, who shaped and twisted, clipped and trained the espalliered tree under whose thinning shade I live, and from whose branches there still falls my native food. Boston, the silver Boston of after the Civil War, Boston, "the only tolerable place of residence on an entire continent" as Berenson, one of the great snobs of Europe, will tell you. The gentle people of Boston seen in Europe are seen to *go* with their surroundings, because, like the Europeans about them, they are Provincials whose value as a spectacle lies in being provincial.

The gentle people of Boston are well bred, as provincial Europeans are well bred. They are, if anything, better bred. Delightful in small things, they are distressing in big things. The arts and letters of their patronage are the vulgarest art and letters in the world. While common vulgarity, touching in its ignorance, is respectable for its courage, Bostonian vulgarity is experienced and timid. It is misleadingly called vulgar. I could make my meaning clearer if I could bring myself to call it cheap.

The medium in which such minds as Perry live is the philosophy of Pessimism — the philosophy to which every child attains when he thinks he has discovered that there is no Santa Claus, the philosophy which enables a grown man to write (1863) in a mock letter to a new-born girl "an account of the hollowness of all things and how

dolls are filled with sawdust," or in 1901, "One thing, don't get sad with life. It's depressing, but take it for granted that it is depressing and a fraud; and it is strange how much delight one gets from constantly seeing one's theories borne out by facts. It's the greatest consolation in the world, beyond money and beyond price." This narcotic spirituality differs from the consolation of seeing life as fraud in contrast to ideal act.

To this Pessimism was joined at times the familiar philosophy of an Evil Creation, the last decadence of Puritanism. "As fashionable" as Perry said, "as appendicitis," it cannot be made to have any bearing on sane action. So long as it remains joined to even fairly decent morals it cannot become anything but an affection of thought. It is the origin of slouth and its own origin lies in the faith of fear, the only faith that Perry had. Like all snobs and like most Bostonians, he looked out on life from behind a shell of fear. The fear of being made a fool made him appear daring sometimes as in 1888 after the Bayreuth Parsifal. Barrett Wendell mentions Perry's "expression of somewhat bored satisfaction with his own opinion."

If Morse or Robinson had troubled to collect the other side of Perry's correspondence, and if in this collection Mr., Mrs., and Miss Blank, the villains of all collected letters, did not appear, we "outsiders" as Perry called us, would have a first-rate exemplar of snobbism. But even as Benjamin Franklin was not, in Barrett Wendell's phrase, "technically a gentleman," so Perry himself, though he "always regarded society as an invention of stupid people to get the bright people to entertain them," was not a first-rate snob. He could not follow Henry James ("the best writer of his generation," 1908) in the last explorations of worldly mysteries. Just as in 1924, he bought a radio, so in 1914 he began to hate the Huns and to admire the Limeys. And we find him writing Solomon Reinach (in the opinion of John T. Morse, "perhaps the most distinguished among the learned men of Europe") that the *Life and Letters of Page* is a "more valuable book" than the *Education of Henry Adams*. Even as he reached his final height of snobbism in the enjoyment of the *Saturday Evening Post*, so the deepest meaning of the accurate statements which he liked to write to his historian friends has been better expressed by Henry Ford when he said, "History is bunk." No, Perry was not a great snob.

Scarcely comparable in any other way to my grandfather's first

cousin, Brooks Adams, like him, he suffered as a writer from training in the Law, which is apt to make one content with sensible reasons for things so that one lets the non-sensical reasons escape. Perry could not go to the limits of snobbism either in Culture, like Henry James, nor against Culture. He had the talent, but he dared not develop it. "Hitherto (1909) philosophy, like learning (and much painting and much music), has been literary, and life is not literary. Even literature is becoming unliterary — I stop because I am afraid I am simply incoherent." This is keen perception of a tendency which is called *Surrealism* today.

The fear that in order to do anything whatever one must be a little vulgar, makes one a little vulgar — that is to say — very cheap. The fear that in order to believe anything one must be a little stupid, makes one a little stupid — that is to say — very silly. The fear that if one betray at all that one is not completely paralyzed one may at any moment be thought too ridiculous, makes one at all times rather ridiculous.—That is to say — one has no sense of humor. I shall investigate these fears. There is a wealth of illustration of snobbism in these letters. I choose three. First, to illustrate the fear that to do anything is vulgar. Though Perry was almost taken in by Pragmatism, still (possibly because it is more vulgar than cheap) he only got as far as the cheapest part, the first stages of initiation. He says in (1910) speaking of years gone by "As for William James' philosophy, it is the only one I could ever have any patience with, because he kicked down stairs and out of the house the whole bunch of long-winded, psalm-singing, self-praising philosophers." This skirmish of revolt led to the exact opposite of a real discovery: In 1902 he wrote to William James: "The desire of everything that seems to be established is to establish itself more firmly to petrify itself and dull innovation." The truth is, of course, that nothing can remain established that is not constantly renewed, but Perry was doing pretty well for a "sophisticated" person and might have gone on further, but, alas, he was the husband of his poetic wife and had Robinson, Carman, Hovey and McLane for his poetic friends, so we find him in 1919 living not far from "aristocratic Dublin," N. H., warmed with satisfaction that the London Atheneum dared to say this of our modern Sappho: "We know a good deal of Miss L., who has long been a familiar figure in the anthologies of revolt; Miss L. is, we are persuaded, a negligible poet, with a

tenuous and common-place impulse to write, which she teases out into stupid 'originalities.' Is not the paper full of international hatred and of jealousy? There can be no other explanation." A little of this common-place urge to write would have done Perry himself no harm. And what was it that had happened after seventeen years that a disturbance once permitted in Philosophy could not be permitted in Poetry? The fear of vulgarity became a faith.

One can scarcely over-emphasize, while considering the relation between snobbism and aesthetics and blind stupidity, such a bit coming from the husband of an artistic wife, the brother-in-law of John LaFarge, a friend of Mrs. Gardner (—so "pleasant" when she "did not talk about the Boston Art Museum"—), Dr. Sturgis Bigelow, the whole Giverney school, Monet, Rodin, Pissaro ("and our distinguished Tarbell") during a period of academic residence in Japan.

"Here I live like persons in the New Testament — I regret to say that I refer, principally, to those gentlemen who seem to have been under a cloud when that very popular book was written — I clap my hands and cringing people appear, or don't appear, just as it happens, but more important are many things we don't get hold of, or a sight of here: *books and pictures.*" The Italics are Perry's own! So there are no pictures in Japan! So "Shinto music is not to be distinguished from cat calls." So "one of the weak points of Japanese civilization is that they cannot distinguish between the real and the imitation brands of champagne." So "the Japs won't be a truly civilized race until they correct his fundamental error of serving first the game with salad, and after it, the roast!" Perry presents a contrast to Lafcadio Hearn, who also taught English in Japan.

As Perry said, 1915, "It is really just as hard to be wise after the event as before." So, though he distrusted alike Democrats and Republicans all his life, he admired Theodore Roosevelt II, and though he was chic enough to make Jewish friends during the Dreyfus affair, he was later glad that "Pogroms are fashionable in Poland" and, though a student of Russian literature, "when poor, old, absurd Russia fell flat," he wrote to Reinach, 1917, "Let us be thankful that Leo Tolstoy is not alive to preach brotherly love" and he prophesied that "the future of the world depends on the miscarriage of the Revolution." All this is very silly.

The ill-considered tirades a good American takes to be the conven-

tional sign of his political health, even when these vilifications of the President and entire Body Politic are addressed to influential persons in foreign lands, are not often enlivened by such bits as this about President Wilson and his *tactlessness* to Mrs. Perry's cousin, Cabot Lodge: "He is an autocrat, or he would at times relax and send a flower to his enemies. With tact much can be done with very slight expense; but no!" There is a subject of a cartoon for you, Mr. Max Beerbohm; Woodrow Wilson relaxing and giving Cabot Lodge a flower (1919).

No, Perry had no sense of humor. He had wit. In 1925 he found as he read *South Wind* that he felt once more what he called a wise smile. This "wise smile" is the small *u* of Voltaire and Leo XIII, not the big *O* of Cervantes and Rabelais. He writes from Japan, 1898, "I think the eighteenth-century prose writers save Addison" (Addison not Sterne), "have been over-praised." "How rare is humor. It's a good deal rarer than poetry. . . Dooly is delightful . . . you can't imagine how rare it is to get hold of anything to read out here." How about the Chinese poets? But they were not quite in fashion, and Perry was homesick.

Perry's talents were such as to make him a distinguished provincial citizen. The wise things in his letters deal with local Bostonian matters. Of "that patriot, Henry Lee Higginson" and his project for dumping islands in the Charles River Basin, he asks, 1916, "Why is it that there are some men who can't see a body of water without wanting to litter it up with islands, just as their mates can't see a big tree without wanting to cut it down?" And in 1900, while performing his most important work in life, the reading of books for the Boston Public Library, when the Trustees were about to disperse their medical collections, he wrote: "It seems to me the duty of a library to collect, not to scatter, books; but I am well known to be cantankerous and unreasonable."

If he had been content to address his own small world quietly, he would have been an instrument of wisdom. But he dissipated his mind by calling out to the great public whom his friends commanded. And in raising his voice, he committed his name to the very thinnest and most pretentious *stuff* — most of which he did not really mean. Culture-Philistines, Pharasees and Snobs never say what they really mean.

His friends were unfair to him in accusing him of being a lazy man. Like the type literary gentleman, he learned English, French, German, Russian, Greek, Latin and Sanskrit, and then when he was all through, Perry found he had nothing to say. But with his wide and powerful connections, his industry in telling people what he thought they ought to dislike, his negative zeal, Perry secured for himself a sort of Fame. He inspired a responsive cult of praise and deference among hundreds of people just like himself. (Reinach "often quoted [Perry] as an example of the hellenised American so completely different from the types one most often meets over here.") From such people, as from a sour soil, it is inconceivable that any growth with roots and branches, leaves, flower and fruit should spring.

But Boston is not as Perry said it was "merely a decaying town, like Salem." The country at large, the whole United States (I speak not of New York, which is a market, a port of entry for the dreams of Europe, and not properly of this country) may find itself becoming Bostonian if enough people give themselves time to begin to try to think. It is bound to become so unless it rid itself of every lingering symptom of decadent Puritanism. Then if the country created by Benjamin Franklin suffer, like Benjamin Franklin's great-great-grandson, overwhelming reverses of ill fortune, unless it ground its roots much deeper than at present into the dark, moist narrow deeps which cleave the underlying strata of the rock beneath all rock, it will fall into a supercilious, if self tormented, relapse of the creative spirit.

JOHN BROOKS WHEELWRIGHT

MODERN ARCHITECTURE

MODERN ARCHITECTURE. *By Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr. New York. Payson and Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $5.00.

In *Modern Architecture* Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., establishes himself as very possibly the foremost living historian of his subject. American books on modern architecture, with the exception of Lewis Mumford's, have been as provincial, as ill-informed, as complacent and as reactionary as are most American architects and American schools of architecture. This book is not.

Modern Architecture sub-titled Romanticism and Reintegration is divided into three sections.

In Part One, the Age of Romanticism, brilliantly, somewhat at times in the manner of Sacheverell Sitwell but more seriously, Mr. Hitchcock lists architects, buildings, publications which mark the last years of the Baroque and Rococo and the development of the architecture which followed, from 1750 through the confusion of the 19th century. The Neo-classic revival of the Roman and Greek, and the antiquarian revival of Medieval architecture, bitterly opposite as they once were, are both seen as essentially and almost equally romantic. He clarifies the influence upon architecture of the painters, engravers, and lithographers of ruins and romantic landscape, of the cults of the "sublime" and the "picturesque." He describes the rise of steel construction and the divorce of engineering from architecture. Though entertaining as a problem in criticism the "Gothick" architects are justly ranked as unimportant. The work of the classicists, Sir John Soane and Friedrich Schinckel, of the engineer-architects, Labrouste and Hittorf, is seen to be valuable both intrinsically and as anticipating the transitional problems of the early 20th century. The disintegration of architecture through the development of an eclecticism of taste describes the actual condition of American building even in our own time. For there is no essential difference between the "neo-Gingerbread" bracket of the Garfield mansion and the pseudo-Gothic or pseudo-Maya cosmetics upon skyscrapers of 1930.

Part Two is devoted to the architecture which the author calls not

too happily of the New Tradition, a style developed from the integration of old with new and modern forms, rather than from the imitation of past periods. Two Americans, H. H. Richardson and Frank Lloyd Wright, were leaders — the latter influencing most importantly the work of European masters such as Berlage of Amsterdam. Richardson's independence of the Romanesque with which he is usually associated is ably declared, as is Wright's inability even at the present time to disentangle his architecture from his romantic theories. The decadence of the New Tradition is seen in the buildings for the Paris Exposition of 1925, its continued vigor in the work of such men as Dudok in Holland, and the Viennese Hoffmann, though the severity of their recent designs is obviously influenced by a still more modern movement.

To this more recent movement called by Mr. Hitchcock that of the "New Pioneers" the third and most important part of his book is devoted. The New Tradition is comparable genetically to such essentially derivative styles as the Renaissance and Baroque, but the style of the New Pioneers seems more original even than the Byzantine or Gothic, and has been far more abruptly and self-consciously created. For the New Pioneers a house is a machine in which one lives. Positively, they insist that the design of the facade is a function of the interior, that the interior should be conceived as volumes limited by planes rather than as the arrangement of masses, and that the whole should be a composition of elements primarily utilitarian and structural. The role of the architect should be that of an engineer who, with the judgment of an artist, chooses among several equally adequate solutions of a utilitarian problem that which is aesthetically the most satisfactory. Negatively, the New Pioneers shun all decoration and whenever possible all forms and materials reminiscent of previous styles.

Le Corbusier is the leading theorist and controversialist of the movement but his architecture, though brilliant and original, is frequently inefficient as *machine à habiter*. Walter Gropius preceded Corbusier by many years in actual building and remains the leading New Pioneer in Germany. J. J. P. Oud of Rotterdam Mr. Hitchcock considers to be perhaps the soundest architect of the movement, though both France and Holland are less advanced than Germany in the general acceptance of the new style.

With the exception of two pre-war industrial buildings by Gropius

the work of the New Pioneers falls almost entirely within the last decade. In spite of this their ideas have spread with amazing rapidity. Even in conservative England and Scandinavia, progressive younger architects are turning away from the New Tradition, though America as usual, is far behind. So far as the reviewer knows there is only one New Pioneer building east of the Rockies, a school by Howe and Lescaze, near Philadelphia. California is decidedly more adventurous. Probably other young American architects will follow in the footsteps of Peter van der Meulen Smith, to whom *Modern Architecture* is dedicated and whose death in 1928 deprived America of its first American born New Pioneer. But it is difficult to agree with Mr. Hitchcock's suggestion that America is already next in importance to Germany, France, and Holland in the "development of a new architecture." Certainly Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, the U. S. S. R. and Switzerland are far ahead of the United States in accepting and understanding the principles of the New Pioneers.

As a historian Mr. Hitchcock is more than adequately learned, precise, and admirably synthetic. His bold division of modern architecture since 1750 into three parts, each awarded approximately equal attention, is convincing even though the third part is confined to the last ten years. Especially masterly are his short biographies of individual architects, often completely contradicting conventional estimates of their work. His heroes are Soane and Richardson and Oud, but he is never insistent. At times his method and ideology seem too erudite for the ordinary reader, but his intention is obviously neither that of the sciolist nor the evangelist.

Indeed, Mr. Hitchcock's restraint surprises one a little as he has in the past stooped occasionally to controversy. Even in praising Le Corbusier or condemning Ralph Adams Cram, his discriminating mildness is most persuasive. But his caution in his last chapter, *The Architecture of the Future* — 1929, is a little disappointing. At the end of the section on Romanticism he makes brilliant use of an essay by G. G. Scott upon exactly the same subject but published in 1857. Scott's pages are rich with enthusiasm. He dares greatly with true Victorian confidence and is as often right as wrong. By comparison Mr. Hitchcock's prophecies seem meager, dissipated by a rather conscious Spenglerian melancholy. He is satisfied that the New Pioneers have indeed effected a reintegration of utilitarian with aesthetic purpose, more com-

plete even than the Gothic. But one feels that even he is somewhat disturbed by the puritanical austerity of this new style, born in a very literal sense as a *deus ex machina*. Yet he offers us little comfort by suggesting that the greatest architects of the new style are already at work and that "except for him who succeeds at last in creating the architecture of the skyscraper it is not likely that architects will for some time have the opportunities for creation that Le Corbusier, Oud, Gropius, and certain others have already had."

The reviewer would like to suggest somewhat timidly that the problem of future architects is nevertheless the development of ornament. He is at one with Mr. Hitchcock in feeling that any contemporary architectural ornament is intolerable, and that our present period of "sterilization" was inevitable. Yet he is tempted to propose that the ornament of the future will derive not from geometry, nor from modern painting, nor from any of the other sources of "modernist" decoration, but rather from mechanical devises such as steam radiators, electric bulbs, hydrants, mailing chutes, radio dials, electric fans, neon tubes. These objects are at present merely utilitarian but already it is fashionable to consider them ornamental. The Gothic arch was for several decades used only for a structural purpose though it became eventually the fundamental motive of Gothic ornament. The analogue is not exact, yet a future ornament of "gadgetry" seems not improbable.

The reviewer is so heartily in sympathy with Mr. Hitchcock's ideas that possible errors in his book seem minor. It is regrettable that more analytical attention should not have been given to Gropius' work at Dessau. The Bauhaus building remains the most imposing single achievement of the New Pioneers, and the director's house at Dessau of 1926 seems superior technically, and at least equal aesthetically to any structure of Le Corbusier's previous to that date. Erich Mendelsohn should not have been dismissed with merely casual reference. His reputation both in Germany and America is so great that he should at least have been awarded a more critical damnation. It is unfortunate, too, that the thankless problem of the skyscraper about which there is so much chauvinistic sentiment should not have been clarified. And lastly, the author's style is perhaps a little too much influenced by the German, and his spelling by the French: "-ism" is, after all, preferable in English to "-isme," and "neo" to "néo." But these idiosyncra-

sies are to be pardoned one whose first and second names have suffered voluntary post-baptismal hyphenation.

The typography and composition of *Modern Architecture* is pretentious but scarcely successful. The title-page, bastard titles, dedication and chapter headings are in sans-serif capitals, the rest of the text in serif type, a mixture especially unhappy in a book of decidedly permanent value. The margins of the text are luxurious though badly proportioned; those around the halftones extravagant; but that of the title-page is a miserly quarter of an inch. And in spite of the fact that the type is unpleasantly small, much space is wasted by separating the paragraphs by blank lines, rather than by indentations, in order apparently to achieve an even outer alignment.

One is tempted also to find fault with the illustrations which seem parsimonious. But the quality of the halftones is adequate and their size would be tolerable if only there were more. The text is worthy of at least three times the number of illustrations, especially as the author's choice of photographs is obviously hampered by what was doubtless a necessary economy on the part of his publishers. Perhaps the successors to Payson and Clarke will publish a really sufficient corpus of plates, selected and annotated by Mr. Hitchcock.

These physical shortcomings do not modify the fact that *Modern Architecture* is a scholarly and critical achievement of the greatest originality and distinction. Unfortunately this will be more thoroughly appreciated in Europe than in America.

ALFRED H. BARR, JR.

STUDY OF HAWTHORNE

HAWTHORNE. *By Newton Arvin. Boston. Little, Brown & Co.* 1929. $3.50.

Mr. Arvin seems to have added nothing to what was already known about Hawthorne's life. His solitude, and its numbing effects on his work had already been sufficiently brought out, for instance by Lloyd Morris in *The Rebellious Puritan* and Herbert Gorman in *Hawthorne, A Study in Solitude.* Mr. Arvin's own selections from his journals told the story as clearly as necessary. One would like to know more about his relations with his wife as they developed over a period of twenty years or so. For a man with so few important contacts this relation should be of the utmost significance. Mr. Arvin has shed no new light on its apparent failure. (The journals seem to show that only the first years of married life marked a break in Hawthorne's terrified isolation.)

The importance of the book lies in Mr. Arvin's effort to determine with some finality Hawthorne's place in American letters. His analysis of *The Scarlet Letter, The Blithedale Romance,* and the *House of Seven Gables* is very acute. He points out that although Hawthorne seldom realized his fables in the round, seldom created figures with a convincing independent life of their own like a Tolstoy or a Balzac, he often invented myths of eternal, though limited significance. His theme is one aspect of the American centrifugal individualism. He studies the maleficent effects of isolation, which he usually connects with sin. The allegories which he constructs to illustrate this theme have a necessity and a truth independent of the characters that act them out: he possessed a significant vision of American life even though he did not quite succeed in realizing it in a novelist's terms. For Hawthorne's work up to the time he went to Europe, this diagnosis is quite satisfying. But there are two points where one might question Mr. Arvin's conclusions. The first is the highly debatable question of the reasons for Hawthorne's limitations; the second is his estimate of the importance of the work which followed his trip to Europe.

Mr. Arvin is disposed to attribute both the poverty of Hawthorne's

range of subjects and his failure to realize them in the round, to the effects of his meager environment on the man. He points out that Hawthorne was never able to find a fertile adjustment to the world of action. This limited the range of his sympathies and compelled him to choose his subjects among people more or less like himself. I have no doubt there is some truth in this. The man was undoubtedly stunted by his environment. But it may be questioned whether a poet has to share the experiences of the types he pictures, and therefore whether his failure as a poet is entirely due to his personal limitations. A poet must see his subjects as significant; but if he cannot find significant individuals among his contemporaries that is not necessarily his fault. They may actually *be* insignificant. Anyone who reads Hawthorne's account of the Customs House at Salem will be convinced that Hawthorne saw the New Englanders of his day clearly enough. He had plenty of porters and grave-diggers and Malvolios ready to his hand, but no Macbeths and only a few rather shop-worn Hamlets. He could not like Sinclair Lewis make his Malvolios carry the main burden of his vision. Like many another nineteenth-century author it was as though he had a vision with no contemporary relevance and no contemporary embodiments. Mr. Arvin does not sufficiently show how a rootless society may have stunted the poet independently of its effects on the man.

It is this which keeps Mr. Arvin from seeing the full importance of Hawthorne's experience in Europe. He sees Europe as completing the estrangement of Hawthorne which had been begun in Massachusetts. He considers unimportant the unfinished romance, *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret,* because of its melodramatic machinery and the unreal dilemmas of its characters. To estimate this work on these terms is to be too moralistic; for the change brought about by Europe was not a change in Hawthorne's character, but a change in what he *saw*. Behind *Dr. Grimshawe* there is a *vision* of the greatest importance: a vision of the difference between Old England and New England. In getting that down as well as he could, Hawthorne displayed the heroism proper to the artist, which consists in a fidelity to what he sees. Henry James was to take up this work where Hawthorne left it off, and T. S. Eliot where Henry James left off. We are still trying to digest some of the things Hawthorne saw after his sojourn in Europe. Hawthorne gained a direct and uninterpreted perception of a society. Mr. Arvin has been

more interested in the ethical problems of Hawthorne and his characters. He has not digested Henry James's remark that Hawthorne had nothing to write about in a society with "No state in the European sense of the word . . . no sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army . . .—no Epsom nor Ascot." It is significant that Henry James should have mentioned the races in the same breath as Church and State. It indicates his gift, which he to some extent shared with Hawthorne, for concrete and unmetaphysical awareness.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

VALOR AND GLORY

THE SENSE OF GLORY. *By Herbert Read. New York. Harcourt Brace & Company.* 1929. $3.00.

Mr. Read in his latest book evinces a discontent prevalent in certain circles with the world of our times. This discontent can hardly be said to supply an emotional background for his book. It is by no means a spring-board from which the author precipitates himself into the reflections embodied in these essays on Froissart, Descartes, Vauvenargues, Henry James and others. The impetus to his reflections has never the character or force of an emotional impulse. But Mr. Read's discontent is apparent and it is significant because it is most apparent where he has addressed himself, or is about to address himself, to what has given his book its title, the sense of glory.

"The world in 1715," Mr. Read observes, "seemed as empty as it did in 1915, and continued to be empty during Vauvenargues' life as it continues in ours — empty of grace, of faith, of fervor and magnanimity." In the early twentieth as in the early eighteenth-century reaction, according to Mr. Read, has taken the shape of resignation and despair. In both of these epochs the sense of glory is wanting. "We have lost the sense of glory," so concludes the essay on Froissart, "because we have lost the habit of faith. We neither love deeply enough, nor think deeply enough, nor feel deeply enough to enjoy life's most impressive sanction." And it is generally in connection with reflections of this nature that Mr. Read introduces the idea of the sense of glory.

But before we examine this sense of glory it will be well to consider the criticism contained in Mr. Read's book as a whole because this criticism cannot be discussed without difficulty and with justice to itself on the basis merely of the idea of the sense of glory. Its merits are a gift of very fine analysis, a wide and interesting range of reference from books and, though less consistently, a command of lucid exposition. These merits are everywhere apparent in Mr. Read's essays but especially so, we think, in the admirable essays on Descartes, Sterne, and Henry James. They are easily enumerated and these merits are of a kind that does not require an elaborate statement. But we would say of them emphatically before passing to what appears the

deficiency of Mr. Read's criticism that although they are easily set down they are far less easily overestimated.

Mr. Read's criticism, on the other hand, lacks cogency. It lacks that particular kind of cogency that is a sign of a proper integration of knowledge with experience. He lacks, we think, the identical thing that he admires in Vauvenargues in whose life the fusion of reading and experience is clearly indicated by Mr. Read. And the same circumstance is at the bottom of what he admires in Bagehot and what he describes in words that Bagehot used of Béranger: "He puts things together; he refers things to a principle; rather they group themselves insensibly round a principle." In other words Mr. Read admires in Bagehot an organization depending on a center of gravity; and a center of gravity, we feel, is an essential of effective thinking. Personal experience is not the original or the final sanction but it is the sanction that makes a principle operative on the intellectual and moral levels, and operative precisely as a center of gravity. It is such a principle that we do not find in Mr. Read's criticism and its absence is emphasized by an unrestrained use of his strong analytical faculty which gives to his work an air of anxious intellectuality. It is more essentially marked by a failure to come to his main point decisively and as if inevitably. There is no force of conviction, no force even of an impelling understanding of his subject, in the way Mr. Read advances his idea of the sense of glory.

Yet it required temerity to bring forward this idea at all in the face of a generation which largely feels with the hero of Ernest Hemingway's last novel that words like victory, heroism, glory, etc., have become impotent and indecent. And we shall try to follow as carefully as possible Mr. Read's presentation of the idea by a number of quotations which we introduce with the observation that in the house of glory, as we gather in the course of Mr. Read's essays, there are many mansions. There are at once sanctuaries and *places d'armes*. "Froissart's pages," we read, "are vivid with a personal radiance of men who achieve glory." Again we are told that our age "with so few illusions, with such poor outlet for emotion and reverence, cannot afford to be either indifferent or ignorant, and must in the end go to Malory and his like to recover certain necessary virtues" — the virtues which are included in the sentiment of glory. But Mr. Read continues: "That glory has no necessary connection with war is clear after a

moment's reflection; for martial glory is not an essential glory, and we must still distinguish glory with grace — as in Wolfe and Nelson — from glory with pride—as in Alexander and Napoleon." Thus are we introduced into an inner region of glory. And we proceed further when Mr. Read quotes Vauvenargues' *Discours sur la Gloire*, a work which he pronounces to express "the noblest attitude of mind" and of which the essential argument is "that glory and virtue are interdependent; one cannot exist without the other."

In the first essays in his book Mr. Read quotes Vauvenargues to an extent that would ascribe a preëminence in this man among those who have enjoyed the sense of glory. But in the essay on Vauvenargues itself he writes: "True glory is a private and discreet virtue, and is only realized in solitariness. It is not Vauvenargues, but Traherne in his *Centuries of Meditations*, who has given us the true definition of glory. . . . . Perhaps the difference between Traherne and Vauvenargues in this respect is that Vauvenargues, like Malory before him and in common with the whole tradition of chivalry, saw in glory a reflection of the esteem of other men; whereas Traherne, more profoundly, found glory not in the active pursuit of worship but in the quiet possession of the objective world." Here then we are in the sanctuary; and in this last phrase Mr. Read has said a good deal. He has come close to saying what probably never can be said no matter how often and how variously it has been expressed. But has he not come circuitously to this inner sanctuary of the sense of glory? Surely there is a more direct, a more inevitable approach to it, and one, fortunately, with more instant appeal for the world today than by way of Froissart, Malory and even Vauvenargues, admirable as they are. For glory with them, as Mr. Read acknowledges, includes something too much of physical valor and the glamor of arms. And these are associated with military grandeur which in Mr. Read's own words has spoilt and discredited glory in our time, and they are not at the heart of the matter. But "the quiet possession of the objective world" finds a far less qualified expression in much of the world's greatest poetry. It is simply the recognition of spiritual fact in the integrity of the universe. For us it is the realization:

> The angels keep their ancient places; —
> Turn but a stone and start a wing.

W. E. Sedgwick

ELIOT ON DANTE

DANTE. *By T. S. Eliot. London. Faber & Faber.* 1929. 3s. 6d.

This is the least pretentious book that Mr. Eliot has written. In its sixty-eight pages he has attempted, he says, only to give an account of his acquaintance with Dante. If that were indeed all, reading this book would be of some profit. A poet showing us how he reads poetry is an infrequent sight and one sufficient to sharpen our own sensibilities. As a matter of fact, Mr. Eliot has gone further. He has taken the role, not of professor, but of tutor of literature and has given us advice not only about the mechanics of the subject but also about the difficulties we must clear from our path.

He is not, however, attempting anything like an "introduction to Dante" and questions such as the debt of Dante to St. Thomas Aquinas interest him not at all for the present. Even if this is the least pretentious and perhaps the least provocative and interesting of Mr. Eliot's books, it is still of value to a generation all too prone to leave Dante in the limbo of great reputations.

Concerning mechanical questions, Mr. Eliot is confident that Dante can be enjoyed, not fully perhaps, but adequately, even if one's equipment is as small as his own: "a public school knowledge of Latin, a traveller's smattering of Italian, and a literal translation beside the text." He gives advice about translations, is insistent that the *Divine Comedy* be read as a whole and before the *Vita Nuova*, and suggests further readings. He begins with suggestions about the beauties of details, individual passages of the *Inferno*; and passes on to more general considerations about the whole poem when he discusses the *Paradiso*.

More important than this technical advice is the *apologia* that is implicit in Mr. Eliot's book, his justification of his belief in "the importance of Dante as a master — I might even say *the* master — for a poet writing today in any language."

There are three items in this justification. First, Dante is the universal school of style for poets. The imitation of Dante will do the young writer less harm than that of any other poet. The young poet

will learn from the *Inferno* that "the greatest poetry can be written with the greatest economy of words, and with the greatest austerity in the use of metaphor, simile, verbal beauty, and elegance." As an instance of this, Mr. Eliot cites several similes which, he points out, are intensive not expansive, as, in two different ways, those of Homer and Shakespeare are. Consequently the first reading of Dante always results in clear if not full understanding. This "universal" style comes from two facts: first, that Dante's Italian is very close to mediaeval Latin which was an international medium of communication; secondly, that Dante's Europe was mentally more united than we can now conceive. The first of these two points is true and interesting, neither before nor after Dante was there a poet whose medium was not conditioned by local or personal peculiarities. After Latin became an international language, about 50 A.D. when men from the provinces were beginning to write literature, it produced no great poet. The nearest approximation to Dante's universal medium in classical times was, one might say, the prose of Seneca. The second point that Mr. Eliot makes is true, doubtless, but one feels that his frequent preoccupation with religious and political questions — not otherwise noticeable in this book — has caused the appearance of a small red herring. At least it seems that young poets are being counselled to imitate a poet whom, *a priori*, they cannot imitate.

Mr. Eliot's second justification for the study of Dante is closely connected with the first. Just as Dante used a language which was close to an universal language, so he used a method of expression, that is, allegory, which was universally comprehended. Mr. Eliot is aware that allegory is not understood or liked just now; he has something interesting to say about its advantages for the writing of poetry. "For a competent poet, allegory means clear visual images," and those images gain intensity by having a meaning to back them. Dante's visual imagination was of an age which saw visions. And here Mr. Eliot stresses the fact that allegory is not a romantic nor a private device: "Speech varies, but our eyes are all the same."

The third justification is twofold: the *Purgatorio* shows that philosophical statement can be great poetry and the *Paradiso* shows that states of beatitude can be the stuff of poetry. Here Mr. Eliot has added nothing to what he has already said in his essay on Dante in *The Sacred Wood*. But he has become more the teacher, and by

pointing out the romantic partiality for suffering (Shelley's "sweetest songs") and the difference between Victorian optimism and Dante's conceptions of improvement and beatitude he has assisted us to get rid of what are merely temporary prejudices.

This same accuracy of historical sense is shown in the chapter on the *Vita Nuova*. Although Mr. Eliot does not say as much here as he has elsewhere (particularly in the essay comparing Dante with Donne which appeared in a volume of the *Roseau d'Or* series) he does indicate two difficulties which impede our true appreciation of that work. Ours is an age which approaches the *Vita Nuova* with the expectation of something like a "confession." Influenced by Rousseau we are interested in "personalities" — provided that they are indiscreet. This nose for gossip prevents our being able to think ourselves into an age when people were really concerned with the salvation of souls. Also our age is one which finds more meaning in origins than in final causes. We see more significance in what Dante may have felt when he first saw Beatrice than in what was for Dante the final cause of his love: the attraction towards God.

The importance of this book as far as Mr. Eliot is concerned is that it shows him more definitely anti-romantic in his tastes than before, if only by reason of his emphatic adherence to the criterion of universality. Its importance for Dante is — considering what Mr. Eliot himself has written previously — *nil*. For the person who has not read Dante — and he is the sole objective of the book — it is an excellent *vademecum*. One hopes that the rest of the series (one other has appeared: Miss Sackville-West on Marvell) will be as good. The idea of poets writing about poets is excellent, but the announcement of Mr. Humbert Wolfe on Tennyson is not inviting. The nineteenth century does not need exhumation; it would be more profitable, for instance, to read Mr. Robert Frost on Vergil.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

TWO ASPECTS OF TELEMACHUS

THE SOUND AND THE FURY. *By William Faulkner. New York. Cape and Smith.* 1930. $2.50.

LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL. *By Thomas Wolfe. New York. Scribner's.* 1929. $2.50.

Both of these novels deal with the South, the theme of both is the decadence of a family, and both are unusually rhetorical. *The Sound and the Fury* treats imbecility, incest, alcoholism, and insanity; it is almost unreadable. The vices celebrated in *Look Homeward, Angel* are less extravagant, though no less pernicious; the book is perhaps too readable. In each case, the striking characteristic is the style. The books are really not novels, but declamations. The effects are emotional, not cerebral. Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Wolfe are poets, and they write in the manner of poets.

The Sound and the Fury is the story of a degenerate Mississippi family, dropped piecemeal from the minds of the agonists. The book begins in the chaotic brain of Benjy, a man of thirty, a mute whose mind has never developed. For ninety delirious pages the story unfolds in the disordered consciousness of an idiot. Benjy lacks time-sense, and is incapable of relating impressions; Benjy lacks judgment, and cannot distinguish between significant and insignificant, actual, remembered, and imaginary; and, of course, Benjy's mind-words are the mind-words of a child. It is through this medium that Mr. Faulkner has chosen to introduce his characters, sketch the necessary background, and supply us with tags and motives for the ensuing narrative. He has been courageous, but I question the practicability of his device. The deliberate obscurity of the opening pages repels rather than invites; and when the reader perseveres, he struggles out at the other end of Benjy's maunderings with no clearer an idea of what has happened, or may be expected to happen, than he had when he entered.[1] Once this section is traversed, however, the going is easier.

[1] I can speak only for myself, of course. Nevertheless, armed though I was with eagerness and the best of will, I tried four times to finish the first section,

There is still considerable incoherence: Mr. Faulkner is fond of the psychological throwback and the technic perfected in the Gæa episode of *Ulysses;* but in spite of these interruptions the story marches on vigorously and intelligibly. By the time he has reached the last pages, the reader is somewhat astonished to discover that he is being held by the force of narrative alone; and even more astonished when he realizes that the narrative is straight from the old school of melodrama — nothing more nor less than the pursuit-on-wheels of eloping lovers. And this after so much agony in stony places! Almost what the movie-blurbs would call "a gripping story." Especially in the last pages, once the stylistic surface has been penetrated, the scenario atmosphere is unmistakable; and looking back, the reader recovers and reaffirms a suspicion which was always felt: that the men and women of *The Sound and the Fury* are not real men and women at all, but dramatic clichés for all their individuality of vice and action. Only the idiot Benjy is realized; Caddy and Quentin and Dilsey and Miss Caroline and Jason are melodrama types.

The style, then. It is the study of Mr. Faulkner's style, the consideration of the book as a rhetorical exercise, as a declamation, that repays the reader. Joyce is the ultimate source, obviously; but the joycean technic has been pretty thoroughly absorbed, integrated with the author's sensibility. Much of the time the writing is on two or more concurrent planes; and Mr. Faulkner's skill in avoiding the clash, while preserving the identity, of each tone is noteworthy. A typical passage (not, by the way, from the idiot's stream-of-consciousness) illustrates his method admirably:

"and Gerald's grandfather always picked his own mint before breakfast. while the dew was still on it. He wouldnt even let old Wilkie touch it do you remember Gerald but always gathered it himself and made his own julep. He was as crochety about his julep as an old maid, measuring everything by a recipe in his head. There was only one man he ever gave that recipe to; that was" *we did how can you not know it if youll just wait I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait Poor Quentin youve never done that have you and I'll tell you how it was I'll tell*

and each time either fell asleep or started gnawing at the wallpaper after ten pages. It was at dawn on S. Swithin's that I finally arrived at what I think is the solution: let the reader start the book at page 93, putting off the introduction until the end. In this way he will not only reassemble the chronology of the narrative, but, thoroughly acquainted with most of the characters, he will better appreciate the significance of Benjy's meditations. In the event of a reprinting I recommend this arrangement. — D. F.

Father then itll have to be because you love Father then we'll have to go away amid the pointing and the horror the clean flame I'll make you say we did I'm stronger than you I'll make you know we did you thought it was them but it was me listen I fooled you all the time it was me you thought I was in the house where that damn honeysuckle trying not to think the swing the cedars the secret surges the breathing locked drinking the wild breath the yes Yes Yes yes "never be got to drink wine himself, but he always said that a hamper what book did you read that in where Geralds rowing suit of wine was a necessary part of any gentleman's picnic basket" *did you love them Caddy did you love them When they touched me I died*

While this is by no means an original technic, it is nevertheless beautifully employed. The diction is generally natural (although I suspect a certain stagey cleverness in the interjection of "what book . . . rowing suit" into the progressing statement "he always said that a hamper of wine was necessary": it is improbable that two voices would combine so happily as to result in the amusing "Geralds rowing suit of wine"); the expression of the subjective stream is balanced, rhythmic, intense, and at the same time lacking in affectation. The prose owes a great deal to Joyce—possibly too much;[2] but the individual impetus of Mr. Faulkner's sensibility is unmistakable.

The Sound and the Fury is an experiment in prose atonality, and, as such, is memorable. *Look Homeward, Angel* is at once less experimental and more effective. It is, no less than Mr. Faulkner's book, a rhetorical *tour de force;* only here (and not wholly because the rhetoric is recognizably of the established tradition), the impact upon the reader is stronger. This is partly due to the fact that Mr. Wolfe has been far more successful than Mr. Faulkner in the realization of his characters. Eugene and his brother, Ben, are first of all real persons; after that they may be types, symbols, or what you will. The narrative, too, is less lurid, less melodramatic, than that of *The Sound and the Fury*. The subject is the inevitable first-novel subject: Myself When Young; and undeniably the autobiographical impetus is at times so unassimilated that the emotional tone is wrenched out of all proportion; but the author has written with such élan, and at the same time with such sincerity, that he seldom falls into the artificial manner which marks the other book. *Look Homeward, Angel* is an extended oxymoron: a natural declamation.

[2] *Cf. Ulysses*, p. 732 (1st ed., 1922): ". . . and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes."

In spite of its six-hundred-odd pages, the book as it stands has been generously cut. This I think is unfortunate. I do not know the content of the deleted passages, but I take it that their inclusion would have cleared up much in the book that seems incoherent and dangling. For example: the story begins with the picturesque figure of Oliver Gant, the father of Eugene and Ben. He is described in considerable detail, his character and his actions are given a portentous prominence, and throughout the first half of the book he is the centre of interest. But later, as more and more attention is given to his children, Gant fades: not gradually, but suddenly. It is almost as if Mr. Wolfe had forgotten him entirely. Thereafter he pops back into the narrative at infrequent intervals, but his appearances are never significant; after the first splendid delineation, the history of Gant is a text full of lacunæ. I cannot help but think that this apparent awkwardness, together with many other inconsistencies, is the result of scissoring. If the book had to be cut (as a matter of fact, it is a third too long still), there are innumerable episodes of minor or irrelevant interest, whose excision would have done less harm.

Apart from these flaws, which are possibly editorial, *Look Homeward, Angel* suffers somewhat from two venial shortcomings of its author: Mr. Wolfe is far too discursive; and Mr. Wolfe is too easily led by his emotion. The latter fault is the more serious. It spoils most of the University episodes, for the reader is uncomfortably aware that here Eugene is not Eugene but, *pro tempore*, the author himself, too intent upon paying off old scores to remember his balance. The emotion is so strong that the tone of these passages disintegrates into one of savage personal invective; the unity of the plot is interrupted, the illusion destroyed. At no time, however, does Mr. Wolfe err so blatantly as does Mr. Richard Aldington, say, in the opening chapters of *Death of a Hero*, where the intensity of the latter's conviction leads him into an exhibition of self-indulgent animus which, for cheapness and general unpleasantness, is hard to match in reputable literature. And Mr. Aldington is a much more experienced writer than Mr. Wolfe.

Again, the style. If Mr. Faulkner is an exponent of atonality, Mr. Wolfe's writing is polyphonic. He cultivates, among others, the periodic style. Scattered through *Look Homeward, Angel* are rhapsodical lyrics of the most daring kind: daring, because in writing of this sort the pitch is necessarily so precarious that one is constantly apprehensive

lest the exaltation collapse; the rhetoric go over into bombast. It is Mr. Wolfe's élan that sustains him. It would be easy to rant, easy to fall into the snare of Paterine "beauty"; but the touch is firm, the manner impeccable, lovely. Not even in the mystical passages which close the book is there the least fogging, the least vagueness. And he ends with a cadence of many voices, where, though the poignant modulation is of our day, one is inevitably aware of the tremendous beat of the great English prose:

> And day came, and the song of waking birds, and the Square, bathed in the young pearl light of morning. And a wind stirred lightly in the Square, and, as he looked, Ben, like a fume of smoke, was melted into dawn.
>
> And the angels on Gant's porch were frozen in hard marble silence, and at a distance life awoke, and there was a rattle of lean wheels, a slow clangour of shod hoofs. And he heard the whistle wail along the river.
>
> Yet, as he stood for the last time by the angels of his father's porch, it seemed as if the Square already were far and lost; or, I should say, he was like a man who stands upon a hill above the town he has left, yet does not say "The town is near," but turns his eyes upon the distant soaring ranges.

Is this only "fine writing"? A reviewer for a British magazine points out the fact that the contemporary "simple style" is quite as dangerous as the grand style which it supplanted. Anderson and Hemingway illustrate this. Anderson's later books, he observes,

> seem each to be written for a more childlike public and with a greater detestation of every form of literary machinery, [and the reader] will see at once that the fear of rhetoric leads to pacific depths of bathos, to depths that have never been equalled by the banality of the old extravagant writers.

Hemingway's simplicity is of a different kind. It is intensely rhetorical. When it fails, as it often does, especially in the descriptive passages in *Farewell to Arms*, it fails for the same reason that *The Sound and the Fury* fails: the artifice stifles the emotion. The Cult of the Stark is perilous, and Mr. Wolfe has done well to avoid it. But he has not fallen into the other extreme. Though his prose is studied, the artifice is an integral part of the whole. His writing is not the "beautiful" expression of emotions; rather, it *is* the emotions. It is utterly unselfconscious.

The shadow of Joyce is heavy upon Mr. Faulkner and Mr. Wolfe, as, indeed, it is heavy upon us all. Directly or indirectly, we owe to *Ulysses* most of what is fine, as well as much that is false, in our new technic. Most of all we are indebted for the revival of interest in technic *per se*. The day of the Sententious Illiterates — the Ander-

sons, the Dreisers, the Lewises, and the Lawrences: ("It don't make no difference how you say a thing, so long as you got a thing to say") — is already part of last year's calendar. We know that in order to say anything, we must first of all learn to write. The instrument is too precious to abuse. And, whether we care to admit it or not, Joyce has been teaching us all over again its uses, old and new. Ulysses is still looking for a Telemachus.

DUDLEY FITTS

TECHNIQUE IN CRITICISM

PRACTICAL CRITICISM. A Study in Literary Judgment. *By I. A. Richards. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Company.* 1929. $4.00.

In this volume, Mr. Richards gives us a great many facts about thirteen poems in relation to a much larger number of students; he then proceeds to make his facts available for discussion by inventing and defining the terms of discussion. The labour is the greater because he has to use words already horribly vague, full of dead presences, from the flatulence of casual custom. How far this is contrary to ordinary practice should be made plain. He does not begin by telling us what poetry is about or what it is or what it must be or even what it has been. He shows us what kind of response people actually make to poetry, how as a rule that response is inadequate and why, and how that response may be improved. It is a question of getting at a poem in terms of itself rather than in the terms of a reader's self. It is a question of learning to read English. For the rest, after you have read a poem, actually known it, you must then learn how either to discard it as bad or choose it to be a part of yourself as good. You have only to remember, before the act of choice, that the reading of a good poem is a discipline only less arduous than its writing.

Now all of us are interested in what happens to us when we read poetry, and most of us are willing to talk about it. The common tone of such conversation is either frustration or superficiality. We either do not understand one another's terms or we do not understand the substance of discussion. We commonly take our disparity tacitly for granted and go on talking as if we were unanimous—in the hope that by deceiving ourselves we should instruct our interlocutors. We should do better if in the beginning we avowed and limited our disparity. Terms would of necessity become common, unanimity approximate; because we should discover what we were disagreeing about and so find ground for agreement. Such a beginning would be mainly occupied with the collection of data and the discussion of words. We should make each of us small dictionaries of our own, where definition was knowledge achieved; and we should try to use the same words as our friends.

In the particular field of poetry, Mr. Richards is making such a dictionary, and it is in this sense that his notions of criticism are practical. We can all use his words; and many of them we could not use nearly so well until he defined them — for example, there is the fourfold definition of the word "meaning." The purpose of his special dictionary is to aid the understanding of the larger dictionary of words as used in poetry. Mr. Richards puts the matter concisely. "The understanding of speech is an art which we are supposed to acquire chiefly by the light of nature — through the operation of sundry instincts—and to perfect by the dint of practice. . . . That in most cases it remains very imperfect indeed is the principal contention of this book. . . . All we can say is that the masters of life — the greater poets — sometimes seem to show such an understanding and control of language that we cannot imagine a further perfection." He goes on to say that our understanding of language can be improved, and that it must be improved if we are to have any understanding of life itself. Elsewhere, he says: "There is no gap between our everyday emotional life and the material of poetry. The verbal expression of this life, at its finest, is forced to use the technique of poetry; that is the only essential difference. We cannot avoid the material of poetry. If we do not live in consonance with good poetry, we must live in consonance with bad poetry. And, in fact, the idle hours of most lives are filled with reveries that are simply bad poetry."

The documentary parts of Mr. Richards' work, which cannot be rehearsed in brief, amply prove his point. The categories of terms and concepts with which he supplements his data have an extraordinary importance to the critic, the plain reader, and the educator. We are here concerned with the critic and must neglect the other aspects. Even if we object to the definitions Mr. Richards advances, still, such is their importance, that our objections, to be valid, must take the form of collaboration. We may wish to modify, to rearrange. We may discern more in a term or less than Mr. Richards makes explicit. At least we must admit that Mr. Richards has made the terms freshly and definitely available to contemporary material. We can use the terms on any poetry we choose, and we will know in what sense we are using each term. No term is restricted by Mr. Richards to any poem or to any particular class of poem: that is, while

his observations spring from particulars, they are invariably so expressed as to command general use.

We may admit the argument, advanced, for example, by Allen Tate that Mr. Richards is no literary critic in the traditional sense. We do not come from him stuffed with judgment and caricature upon Shakespeare and Dante; but we are better prepared to make our own judgments. Mr. Richards' works are a preparatory school to good criticism, just as the dictionary is to good writing. Though Mr. Tate reprehend it, nevertheless a sound laboratory technique is an excellent aid to the understanding of poetry and its criticism. Whether such a technique can be taught is another matter; that may be Mr. Richards' vainglory. But some may be tempted to teach themselves by the ideal he envisages.

R. P. Blackmur

RECENT VERSE

SELECTED POEMS OF CONRAD AIKEN. *By Conrad Aiken. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1929. $3.00.

O CITY, CITIES! *By R. Ellsworth Larsson. New York. Payson & Clarke, Ltd.* 1929. $2.50.

HIGH FALCON. *By Leonie Adams. New York. John Day Company.* $2.50.

When there appear the collected or selected poems of a mature poet, the temptation to "place" him with respect to his contemporaries is very great. One realizes, of course, that the attempt is very dangerous, but it may conceivably be illuminating. The best American poets of Mr. Aiken's generation, it should be fairly safe by now to say, are Robert Frost (if his age does not disqualify him), W. C. Williams, Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, Mina Loy, Archibald MacLeish, John Crowe Ransom, Wallace Stevens, and possibly H. D. It is doubtful if any one of these is a poet of the very first order if we look for the qualities that Arnold found or thought he found in Wordsworth (and Wordsworth was, according to Arnold, only of the second order) or that one today can find easily enough in Arnold; but Mr. Frost in six or eight of the lyrics in *West-Running Brook* will come fairly near the mark, in spite of his deliberate (and not wholly successful) effort to evade certain themes that Arnold would have insisted on his mastering (see his shockingly timid remarks in the lyric called "The Times Table"); and Dr. Williams will come at least as near in a dozen or more scattered lyrics, in spite of the various criteria of good poetry that he has endeavored at different times to establish, which would, if applied to his own best poems, render them a little or no worth. Whatever the spiritual limitations of any of this list of writers, however, they have shown themselves here and there to be, all of them, first rate stylists. The question arises whether Mr. Aiken is their equal as a stylist; it is my opinion that he is not.

Mr. Aiken's debt to Mr. Eliot has been over-estimated; it really amounts to little or nothing. Mr. Eliot's early work, which is supposed to have exerted the influence, employs a line that is based on the

standard iambic pentameter; Mr. Aiken's line varies, but it is almost never that. The only resemblance that I can discover is the similar tendency to wandering rhymes (very common in all of the late French symbolists, from Laforgue to Vielé-Griffin); and in *Senlin* Mr. Aiken made his protagonist philosophize while combing his hair. Like Mr. Eliot, Mr. Aiken has used a kind of stream-of-consciousness method, and like him also has endeavored through the use of that method to deal rather extensively with the spiritual difficulties and the concrete aspects of our period. *The Waste Land* lacks form; Mr. Aiken's long poems in a sense achieve form or at least cohesion — that is, they are not obviously falling apart from line to line. But if one examines them carefully, it is fairly evident that the lines cohere not because they have any common intention or direction, but because they have no intention or direction; there is nothing to force them apart, no group of identities for the poet to weld together. Mr. Aiken has practically no sense of the integrity of the line; Mr. Eliot, whatever his weaknesses, has that sense as a critic, though he often fails to rise to it as a poet, and, when he does rise to it, often fails to get beyond it. If one performs the experiment of opening Mr. Aiken's book at random to two or three passages in any of the long poems or in nearly any of the short ones, one can scarcely help being struck by the almost exact similarity of his work at every point. The following passage is from page nine, *The Jig of Forslin*:

> I heard a story once of one who murdered,
> For what I cannot remember; but he murdered.
> With a knife's greedy edge, or with white hands —
> What does it matter? The swift deed was done . . .
> That was a sombre sea-pool to explore —
> Strange things are on that floor.
>
> And once, the music I was listening to
> Suddenly opened, like a luminous book,
> To one bright page that told of a strange thing:
> A man stepped out in the purple of an arc-light,
> A man I knew — I knew him well —
> And because the harlot he loved had jilted him,
> He held his breath and died.

This is from a short poem on page 301:

> And already the minutes, the hours, the days,
> Separate thoughts and separate ways,
> Fall whitely and silently and slowly between us,
> Fall between us like phantasmal rain and snow.

And we, who were thrust for an instant so sharply
together,
Under changing skies to alien destinies go.

Melody heard in the midnight on the wind —
Orange poppy of fire seen in a dream —
Vainly I try to keep you. How the sky,
A great blue wind, with a gigantic laugh,
Scorns us apart like chaff.
Like a bird blown to sea am I.

Mr. Aiken's heroes commit murder to appropriate music, fall from skyscrapers, or wander in the lamplight in the rain (to steal a cadence from him) in exactly the same frame of mind and in the same colorless vocabulary. Each act (an almost infinite variety of disconnected and meaningless acts, a kind of cosmic drift or milky way of acts, in fact) passes before one; each is mentioned, but none is poetically realized. One cannot think of any one of Mr. Aiken's poems as a unit, but one can think only of his poetry as a vague and perpetual flux. His poems, like his lines, lack bounds. He achieves a momentary illusion of form by abandoning all claim to form; his poems move evenly, but they might just as well stop anywhere; they are simply a record of revery.

Mr. Aiken has expounded at one time or another theories of musical outline that I do not profess wholly to understand. Musical outline in a poem is, I imagine, if it becomes an isolated quality, a vice rather than a virtue. The kind of proportion that involves not only the sound of the lines, but the meanings and connotations of the words as words, of the lines as lines, and of the poem as a whole, is the sum total of poetic style, but it is a very complex thing. It may occur in poems as short as Mr. Frost's "Acquainted with the Night" or Dr. Williams' "To Waken an Old Lady." It will never be achieved by letting cadences run on indefinitely in a long sweeping wash of sound, for such sound will utterly swamp the other components. To achieve it one must be aware of and control a good many qualities at once. Excessive attention to one quality in art, as in other activities, usually indicates a rather general blindness and seldom results in the mastery even of that quality. Dr. Williams' meter, as pure meter, is incomparably better than Mr. Aiken's, and so is Mr. Frost's. Mr. Aiken's metrical effects are facile and uncontrolled; he succeeds perfectly in achieving second-rate effects that would be mussed up badly by a

more critical, even if more creative, mind, such as, say Mr. Eliot's. Swinburne sins the same way, but does not go so far; also his positive virtues are more considerable. One could say the same of Ezra Pound. Aiken, Swinburne, and Pound achieve their varying degrees of success and their uniform smoothness, one suspects, because their respective critical visions are not much clearer than their creative. Mr. Eliot is not so lucky.

Mr. Aiken's place, then, I imagine, is very likely to be in that fringe of contemporary poets who have achieved a kind of frail brilliance through the exaggeration and limited mastery of some one quality. His best poem is "Priapus and the Pool." It is short, and, though it is a bit diffuse, it says at least as much as any of his long pieces. The cadences are terser and better orchestrated than in anything else he has done; his meter, at least, in this poem, has form — one has a feeling that it is doing fairly definite and interesting things, and one can forecast the arrival of the end before one gets there. The poem deserves a respectable place beside the *Blue Symphony* of John Gould Fletcher, a poet who regarded poetry and music as about the same thing and who thought, for a time, that by naming and suggesting colors in a regulated series one could create a type of music; and beside the "Patterns" and one or two late poems by Amy Lowell, whose nervous preoccupation with leaves and sunlight occasionally took on a brittle charm. Mr. Aiken's place is less among the best poets of our time than among the most interesting poetic curiosities. If one is sceptical about the truth of this conclusion let him compare, say, any of Mr. Aiken's nocturnal reveries with Mr. Frost's "Acquainted with the Night"; the difference is the difference between a formless record of mere fact and a sharply limited and beautifully ordered poetic structure — limited as Arnold used the term, and not in the pejorative sense in which it is often used today, and, though ordered, none the less fearful and haunting — and, incidentally, a poetic structure of vastly more significance than has been so far admitted by any of Mr. Frost's old-guard admirers.

II

Mr. Larsson has metrical habits not unlike Mr. Aiken's; his line is of a different sort, but he uses it the same way. His matter is too seriously dependent upon the later Eliot, and his manner is some-

what dependent upon Cummings. He does to Eliot, however, more or less what the poets of the nineties did to Swinburne. Eliot's matter is no longer felt as something in any way real; it is accepted as a conventional confection. The rain and the rats in the attic become more or less equivalent to the flowers and the flames of sin. Even when Mr. Eliot borrows most profusely he seems to be aware of the reality of the vision of his sources; he is quite simply beaten by it. Mr. Larsson does not appear greatly afflicted by such an awareness of reality — the themes merely present interesting possibilities for rearrangement. His meters are in a sense intricate, but only because, like Mr. Aiken's, they run on more or less indefinitely, not because they are genuinely subtle or difficult: the trick is mainly one of arresting, breaking, and impelling to slightly irregular overflow, the iambic pentameter line, and it is a trick that it is harder to avoid than to indulge in, especially when one is throwing in irregular rhymes. Mr. Larsson, like Mr. Aiken, and like a good many other contemporaries who are popularly supposed to be adroit stylists, is in a state of arrested expertness. He is elaborating on effects that the few first-rate stylists of our time have learned through hard work to avoid entirely. The poems, like or even more than Mr. Aiken's, lack individual identity, though Mr. Larsson has plenty of personality himself — more, in fact, than does Mr. Aiken. There is no one poem in the book as good as "Priapus and the Pool"; but there are not two consecutive lines in Mr. Aiken as good as these from Mr. Larsson:

> Sun in an arc
> and summer dead:
> the year
> spends itself in windiness and din

That is perhaps as comprehensive a comment as one could make on both books; but at odd moments, anyway, Mr. Larsson really makes the most of something he has observed — he has the capacity to learn how to write. Whether he has the inclination remains to be seen.

III

Miss Adams' first volume, *Those Not Elect*, failed, for whatever reasons, to interest me; her second volume interests me a great deal, partly because it contains at least five brilliantly executed poems and a number of fine passages, and partly because it contains a number of

weaknesses, at least several of which are rather common among the better writers of Miss Adams' generation and are in danger of becoming more common. I shall take advantage of the critic's prerogative and begin with the vices.

Two of the faults most common in her work, as well as most irritating, though perhaps not most profoundly important, are a persistent use of certain forms of ambiguous syntax, chiefly the dangling participle and the pronoun of uncertain reference, a use which results in an obscurity in no wise organic to the feeling and hence definitely bad; and a tendency to dilute and expand certain poems ("Windy Way" is one of the worst examples) with pretty literary turns and phrases which bear much the same relationship to poetry that scales bear to music.

More important is her preoccupation with, and exaggeration of the significance of, the feelings attendant upon the fringe of sleep; these feelings are sometimes genuinely curious, but only the most unbridled mysticism can imbue them with any vast amount of meaning. The tendency to take them too seriously is indicative of a tendency to find profundity in the strange simply because it is strange, and this, though it has been a common poetic vice for at least a hundred and fifty years, is decidedly uncritical and is bound to be in one degree or another disastrous to poetry. It is much more difficult to face experience on one's feet and with one's eyes open than in any other condition, and it is hence vastly more necessary that one endeavor to give it order while in this condition.

Miss Adams' mysticism shows itself in another way in two of her most perfectly executed songs, "Time and Spirit," and "The Mount," as well as in a few less perfect pieces. The feeling, the experience, in these poems involves certain ideas which most readers, I imagine, will have a hard time taking seriously, and it involves these ideas not by rejecting them nor by regarding them sceptically, but by accepting them with a certain fervor. The reader, to experience the poems, must likewise accept them; but as the acceptance in most cases can be no more than extremely temporary, the poems become momentary luxuries, indulgences, and are scarcely spiritual necessities. This sort of easy indulgence, of facile escape from the real difficulties of achieving spiritual mastery, is altogether too common in modern poetry. Mr. Hart Crane is another serious sinner on this score, and

one of the greatest is Mr. Yeats, who exhibits an inordinate capacity for temporarily solving the riddle of life in magnificently written lines, his solution, frequently being something no more considerable than a handful of automatic letters, and the grandeur of his rhetoric on such an occasion leaving the reader dumfounded.

Finally, there are probably not over a dozen poems in the book that are not packed with echoes, general and specific, from Yeats. Mr. Yeats, though he has written poems that are almost certainly of a major order, has a very dangerous habit of striking histrionically noble attitudes when he finds himself in the face of situations that are genuinely hard to understand; such attitudes are at best but very rough estimates of the situations and a very rough substitute for the humble and careful exactness of Hardy or of Baudelaire. They are, being somewhat ready-made and standardized, the most easily imitated aspect of his work; and they are particularly tempting to a generation whose more intelligent members are struggling desperately to reassert the dignity and moral values lost by their predecessors. There is every reason to believe at the present moment that Mr. Yeats may exert as funest an influence in the next five or six years as did Mr. Eliot in the last, and one that may be recognized and abandoned more slowly, for appearing to be something it is not. His weaker moments and methods offer too facile an escape from the too facile collapse of Mr. Eliot: they offer escape via a stylistic formula rather than intellectual and moral effort and hence can lead ultimately only to another collapse or to poetry that, though apparently sustained, is devoid of genuine meaning. They add intellectual unsoundness to the emotional unsoundness of Mr. Eliot, or rather they seem to conceal the latter under the former.

For evidence of this danger one need only examine recent work, not only by Miss Adams, but by Edmund Wilson, Raymond Holden, and Robert Penn Warren, to mention no more, all of them writers of considerable ability. These poets have not sold their souls to Mr. Yeats, but they have all been tempted, and the varying degrees to which the temptation has moved them are indicative of a very real peril.

The most perfectly executed poems, in addition to "Time and Spirit," and "The Mount," are "Country Summer," "Song from a Country Fair," and "The Figurehead," and to these three one can

take, I think, very little exception, whether in the matter of style or of conception. The first is a landscape and nothing more, but is a particularly rich and lovely one; the second one is, in superficial appearance, a kind of marginal note, but it possesses very curious and almost terrifying implications; the third, possibly the finest of all, I offer for the reader's consideration:

> This that is washed with weed and pebblestone
> Curved once a dolphin's length before the prow,
> And I who read the land to which we bore
> In its grave eyes, question my idol now,
> What cold and marvelous fancy it may keep,
> Since the salt terror swept us from our course,
> Or if a wisdom later than the storm,
> For old green ocean's tinctured it so deep;
> And with some reason to me on this strand
> The waves, the ceremonial waves have come
> And stooped their barbaric heads, and all spread out
> Their lovely arms before them, and are gone,
> Leaving their murderous tribute on the sand.

There is not only, here, extraordinary beauty of visual imagery, but there is a kind of beauty that is possibly more profound and which it is certainly harder to achieve: the fourth line, for instance, especially as it concentrates in its second half, is one of the most deeply moving lines in the poem, and the emotion is not in the least illusory, though it is impossible, perhaps, to give objectively satisfactory reasons for it — it is something in the cadence and it is something more than that.

YVOR WINTERS

THE Summer 1930

Hound & Horn

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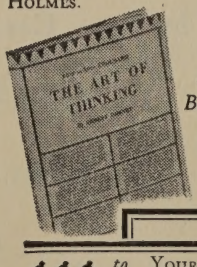

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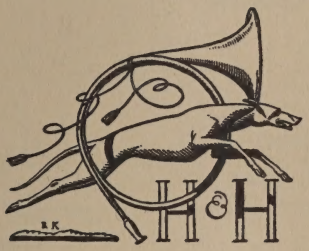

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Allen Tate wrote the introduction to Hart Crane's first book, *White Buildings*.

Gerald Sykes is a contributor to the *American Caravan*.

Eli Siegel won the *Nation* poetry prize in 1925 with his much debated poem "Hot Afternoons there have been in Montana."

Eric Schroeder is an English archeologist who has been teaching at Milton Academy for the last two years.

Robert Shafer is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cincinnati.

ERRATA

(Henry Adams, Part I, Volume III, No. 3)

Page 339, line 28: *May 7, 1924* for *May 7, 1929*

Page 341, line 25: *pride* for *price*

Page 351, line 16: insert *much* between *made* and *of*

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THE
HOUND & HORN

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COMMENT

NOW that everyone has uttered his "second thoughts" and "last words" on Humanism, it is possible to seek grounds for its failure. The most general is the lack of precision, of localization, of the ideas involved; verbally exact, they have been vague in reference, so that summary is almost impossible. Mr. Babbitt's disciples in the universities have repeated his formulae; his disciples in the world have passed beyond such literalism and are seeking to clarify the vagueness. The academic literals will continue to teach, and if they believe that the enunciation of empty principles will lead to great art and literature that is surely a harmless delusion. The artists and writers will continue to work; if they venture on any intellectual flights they will take off from technical problems, from difficulties inherent in their material and its mastery. When ideas serve to overcome such difficulties they have a precise reference and discussion of them is fruitful; when they spring from general reflections and embody no imagination, as is the case with Humanism, they may be acute, they may be indisputable, they may be true, but they solve no dilemmas, because they faced none concretely; they lead nowhere because they never started for a definite destination.

ACADEMIC LITERALS

THE DIAGHILEV PERIOD

I

AN AMERICAN tourist was hunting the back alleys of Venice, one hot morning in the middle of last August, for a church in which Domenico Theotocopulos must have worshipped. He saw its tower from afar, on the edge of a small canal, and passing under an arch, found a barge of black and gold moored to the church steps. Beadles in cocked hats, holding brass rods, bore wreaths into the church and he followed into the cool noon dusk. When his eyes were accustomed to the gloom, he saw opposite him a great byzantine ikonostasis. The Baptism, the Last Supper, their gesso and gilding turned bronze, glowed above a bier, blanketed with heaped-up flowers. Suddenly he became aware of mourners, and the fact that this was, indeed, a funeral. Faces, somehow familiar, ignored him as he passed out into the sunlight, and leaving, he heard the first words of the Greek Orthodox service for the dead. Not until three days later, reading the *London Times*, did he learn that he had unwittingly attended, in San Giorgio dei Greci, the obsequies of a great Russian:

"Serge Diaghilev was born in the district of Novgorod on March 19, 1872. His early career was varied, and he studied, if he did not practice, all the arts. While reading law in St. Petersburg, he turned his attention to music but took to journalism in 1897, and more especially to the criticism of art. He organized the first great exhibition of Russian art in Western Europe, founded an important journal of art (Mir Iskousstva) which lasted from 1899 to 1905, and in 1903

he was in Paris and producing Boris Godunov with a company that included Chaliapin. Thus he began his services to Russian art which he was later to extend to that of most European countries."

Serge Diaghilev, more than any other single person, was responsible for the growth and maintenance of a tradition in contemporary painting, music and dancing. Picasso is not the gold mine of 57th Street and the rue de la Boëtie, wholly because he invented cubism, but in a great measure because Diaghilev commissioned him to decorate Satie's *Parade* and de Falla's *Three Cornered Hat*, and in a succession of ballets furnished this great decorator with the chance to display himself on a grand scale. Stravinsky, Diaghilev found in a class in harmony, and, irritated because his old master Liadov was slow in scoring some Russian fairy tales, ordered *The Fire Bird*. Then followed *The Rites of Spring*, *Petrouchka*, *Pulcinella*, *Noces*, *Renard*, *King Oedipus* and *Apollo Leader of the Muses*: the works by which the composer is known. Without Diaghilev the great tradition of classical ballet dancing might have died of dry rot, or disuse. Instead, first with Fokine, Nijinsky, Pavlova, later with Massine, Dolin and Lifar he made it greater and more popular than ever before. Diaghilev was a synthesizer, a catalyst, who could image in three dimensions the perfect combination of the right dances, for the right music, in the right decor, and by right we must read inevitable.

II

The skeletal structure of classical ballet dancing was developed in France and Italy throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Stretching back to the dances before the ark, the tradition of folk dancing became stylized with usage, finally achieving a mechanical technique which allowed exact

repetition. Toe dancing was codified into a rigid system of five positions, in which the arms, accented by hieratic arrangements of hands and fingers, the legs by linear conformities of feet and toes, were made capable of weaving countless ingenious variations upon a strong formal foundation. During the nineteenth century the technique was intensified into a sterile formula. Dancing masters who had gone from Marseilles and Milan to St. Petersburg were impressed by what they saw of indigenous folk-dancing and incorporated parts of its attractive gaucherie into their curriculum. The technical excellence displayed was phenomenal. Girls were kept exercising at the bar, pointing, bending, taking their attitudes and little else for a year or two, until the master saw a hundred legs tap the same line on the floor at the same instant with an accuracy which was as sterile as it was precise. But when this amazing control of muscular perfection was put to a worthy use, in a setting which had not been stylized out of any common emotional reference, it served as a rigid framework for the ingenious variations and surprising floutings of itself, which depended on its initial strictness and strength.

Twenty-two years ago Serge Diaghilev started as the impresario of the Russian Ballet. His previous technical training in law, in esthetics, in music, his inherent gifts of taste, his consciousness of the chic, his appreciation of social snobbery and his passion for the beauty of surprise and of youth, these in a combination of brilliant energies and practical qualifications made him the isolated genius that he was. The ballet in St. Petersburg had almost petrified between the onslaughts of Italian opera and the strictures of such great classical choreographers as Petitpa and Cechetti. With Fokine as producer and Nijinsky as choreographer and premier danseur, Diaghilev instituted a Romantic revolution culminating in

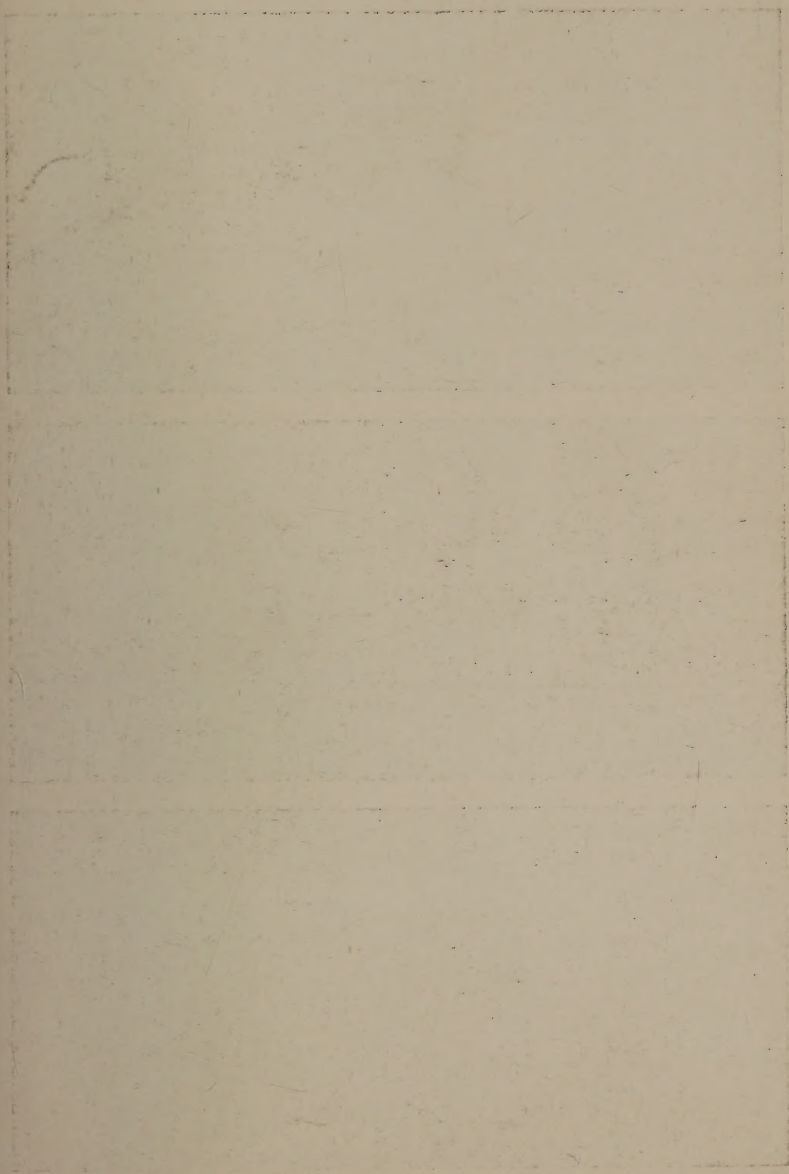
Les Sylphides, 1910

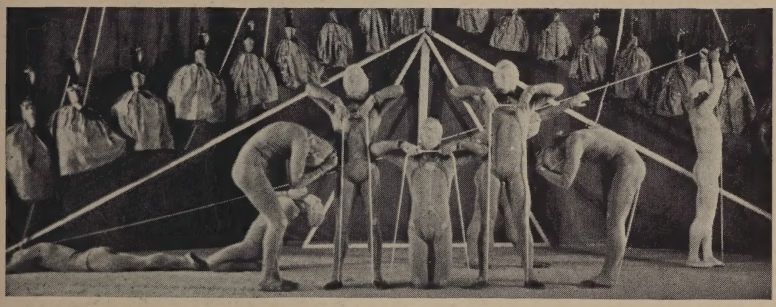
(*Photo, "L'Illustration"*)

(*Thadée Slavinsky:* *Lydia Lopokhova:* *Leonide Massine*)

Les Matelots, 1925 (Rehearsal)

(*Photo, Manuel*)





Ode, 1928

(*Photo, Lipnitski*)

the first night of the *Rites of Spring*, no less full of implications than the debut of Hernani — one of those revolutions which seem to save art from its crippling ideas of perfection once in a hundred years.[1] The dances now invented were based partly upon the old tradition and partly on an archeological interest in Russian folk dancing, as echoed in the music not of Tschaikowsky, but of Rimsky, Mousorgsky and Borodine. The ballets were *Prince Igor*, *Schéhérazade*, *Thamar*, *Fire Bird* and the *Rites of Spring*. Leon Bakst with his brush strokes of oriental illusion, turned everything behind the proscenium into a conflagration of impressionistic palettes, a riot of the sensualism of stuffs and smouldering colors which must still signify to many Americans the spirit of the Russian Ballet. To us, wrapped purely in the eclectic classicism of the 1930's, the dances of fifteen years ago seem, perhaps, inflated, boisterous, and, in spirit, as creased and dusty as the old scenery in front of which they were until last year, still danced. It is true that they were very much in their own epoch. Their effectiveness was based not wholly on the inherent beauty of a perfect synthesis, but on the physical at-

[1] In Carl Van Vechten's *Music After the Great War*, there is an adequate description of the primière of the *Sacre du Printemps*, more valuable as suggesting the atmosphere of aggressive experiment which Diaghilev always managed to stir up, than as a factual description. "A certain part of the audience, thrilled by what it considered a blasphemous attempt to destroy music as an art, and swept away with wrath, began very soon after the rise of the curtain to whistle, to make cat-calls, and to offer audible suggestions as to how the performers should proceed. Others of us, who liked the music and felt that the principles of free speech were at stake, bellowed defiance. . . . The figures on the stage danced in time to music they had to imagine they heard and beautifully out of rhythm with the uproar in the auditorium. The intense excitement of a young man behind me, under which he was laboring, thanks to the potent force of the music, betrayed itself presently when he began to beat rhythmically on the top of my head with his fists. My emotion was so great that I did not feel the blows for some time. They were perfectly synchronized with the beat of the music. When I did, I turned around. His apology was sincere. We had both been carried beyond ourselves."

Nijinsky Backstage after the *Spectre de la Rose*

(*Leon Bakst, Stravinsky, Diaghilev are first three figures from left to right*)

(*Drawing by* Jean Cocteau)

traction, the almost animal appetite of their audience for color — tomato reds, sunflower yellows, grass greens, and not the monochromatic, neatly indicated decors of the years before and after. Their attraction was also partly due to the amazing physical violence of the dancers as people, in orgiastic simulacra.[2] Nijinsky leaped into the air like a sword flashed from its scabbard. The brass and clangour of Tartar emperors, arming from Kazan, bronze thighs through slashed silver pantaloons, in a tempestuous rout across the stage, evoked a fairyland which was a thousand times more satisfactory than thin puppets of heretofore, for these heroes sweated from their labors, their blood pouring out upon the white breasts of prostrate princesses in a palpable, tangible vision, separated from an audience only by music and lights.

The great star of Diaghilev's first nights was Nijinsky. Those who saw him, retain in imperishable memory of sinewy vitality, a fountainous energy and a quality of physical presence, a mysterious personal charm which has never been approximated. Whether he raped a veil as in *The Afternoon of a Faun* ("elusive being, midway between the human and the animal, he has consciousness of nothing beyond his figs, his grapes and his flute," said Cocteau. "As he smoothes with his tongue his jaw, piebald like a horse-chestnut, his quaintly

[2] In A. E. Johnson's book on the Ballet there is a detailed narrative of Schérérazade, the most generally successful of the first ballets. His powers in prose capture at least something of the essential feeling of the piece. "The fires of passion smouldering in the heart of Sobéide leap forth on the instant. A woman scorned or a woman denied — her fury is a thing few men, and least of all an emasculate poltroon can face. A frightful paroxysm shakes the panting queen. Like a tigress baulked of her prey, etc., etc. . . . .

"Palpitating with the vehemence of her expectant desires, Sobéide stands before the open portal, clutching her breasts with eyes glued to the dim recesses beyond. There is a pause, which adds a new delicious torture to her thirsty cravings; then with agile bound, light footed, there comes leaping toward her a young Negro. (Nijinsky)."

fascinating face seems to resent the weight of the horns upon his head. Could we hear him, one imagines he would laugh and bleat almost in the same breath and all the while his wrinkled brow attests his yearning to cross the border that separates instinct from intelligence,") or bounded through an open window, so high that it took six strong pairs of hands with a mattress to break his fall[3] or threaded the almost inextricable maze of the original partition of the *Rites of Spring*, he was an unforgettable artist, and it is useless for one who never saw him to attempt a further evocation of his image. His febrile brilliance spent itself like a rocket and in the tragedy of his insanity and in the great insanity of the war, Diaghilev's ballet rounded out its first chapter.[4]

III

The saga of the ballet is really fit subject for an epic. Only with a poet's license may we obtain even the palest echo of the spirit and essence of the ballet as a company. An heroic

[3] From Jean Cocteau's *Igor Stravinsky and the Russian Ballet.* "It was in 1910. Nijinsky was dancing the *Spectre de la Rose.* Instead of going to see the piece, I went to wait for him in the wings. *There it was really very good.* After embracing the young girl the spectre of the rose hurls himself out of the window. . . . and comes to earth amongst the stage-hands who throw water in his face and rub him down like a boxer. What a combination of grace and brutality! I shall always hear that thunder of applause, I shall always see that young man, smeared with grease-paint, gasping and sweating, pressing his heart with one hand and holding on with the other to the scenery, or else fainting in a chair. Afterwards, having been smacked and douched and shaken he would return to the stage, and smile his acknowledgments."

[4] In *transition*, Volume I, No. 3, there is a story called *The Silent House* by Phillipe Soupault in which there is developed a tragic description of Nijinsky "dressed in a long, dark-grey coat, a light straw hat with a black band, and thick yellow boots, very pale like those worn by hunters or chronic invalids," walking in a closed garden, guarded by his interne, or else in the room above pacing the floor to the cracked gramophone record of an "Invitation to the Valse" (The music of the *Spectre de la Rose*).

adventure, its protagonists were tragedians of the first rank. As W. A. Propert says in his valuable book, *The Russian Ballet in Western Europe:*

"That Diaghilev's enterprise should have survived the war is astonishing, and the record of his journeys between 1914 and 1918 is a convincing proof of his courage and determination. The thunderbolt fell within a week of the termination of that memorable Drury Lane season, and many of the more important members of his company hurried back to Russia. He carried his company over to America, fulfilled his engagements there and was back in Europe by the autumn of 1915. There was a wonderful little season in Paris in December, when he produced *The Midnight Sun,* and earned no less than £4000 for the Red Cross. Then away again to America in January, 1916, for three months, and after a summer spent in Spain another long season opened at New York in the autumn. Between the 16th of October and the end of February, 1917, the company danced in over fifty towns through the length and breadth of the United States. Then again back in Europe, April was spent in Italy, May in Paris and June in Spain. Between July and September they were in South America and returned finally to Europe in November, 1917, spending their time in Spain until they could get through to England, where they landed in August, 1918.

"It was a tremendous Odyssey, carried through under conditions that might have daunted the old Greek himself, and it involved no less than eight Atlantic crossings through all the perilous times of the submarine warfare."

After the war Diaghilev turned his back on Russia and on its legacy. The empire of the Romanoffs was his chief link with the east; the Renascent proletariat, replacing the ro-

mance he had made so much of, banished him to an indefinite exile. For of course the ballet's is an aristocratic realm. It depends on autocracy, absolutism, the projection of individuals against an anonymous mass. Logically enough when Diaghilev and Prokoviev produced their ballet inspired by the U. S. S. R. *The Beat of Steel*, it was rather an empty gesture; the superficial patterns of human pistons and dynamos were surprising only on first sight — and besides, Diaghilev had well exhausted any possible exploitation of the near-orient. Those who at first regretted the passing of *Sadko*, *Prince Igor* and *Schéhérazade* came to realize they were, after all, mainly necessary for their epoch and that the epoch had fulfilled itself.[5]

The impresario ranged about him for such attendant talents as fitted his hands. He went from the east to the heart and brain of the west, and with his unerring chemistry, dissolved Derain into Rossini:—behold *La Boutique Fantasque;* Matisse in Stravinsky: *The Nightingale;* Picasso in Manuel de Falla: *The Three Cornered Hat.* I must rely again on W. A. Propert whose words, so much fairer than mine, may hint at the essential qualities of the first mentioned, which was typical of Diaghilev's important change in the direction of his second period:

[5] At the time of Bakst's death Paul Morand reviewed his achievement in the light of the later non-Bakstian ballets. "It is true that his art is too often vulgar, barbaric, effective only as a blow between the eyes; but such as it is, it has now become an historical phenomenon with its fifteen years of influence upon manners, the theatre, the city, books, and music. . . . . It has been said that it was a Jewish art, with its emphasis upon raw tones, its passion for gold and precious metals, its dearth of line, its nomadic origins, its Oriental sensuality, its contempt for architectural construction. Bakst was, in fact, a Jew; and it was the great Israelite audiences that established the success of the Russian Ballet, that first great international success, marked by the boldness of the audience's dress, its immodesties, extravagant coiffures, depilated bodies, cosmetics; by that mixture of all modes to the point where one could not always distinguish between the house and the stage."

" . . . . Derain's *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), and a gayer more exhilarating entertainment it would be difficult to imagine. His company had certainly de-Russianized themselves, and *Paris 1870* was glitteringly stamped over the whole production. . . . Here was to be the first example of the far reaching change that had come over the ballet — the work of a man who, with the zeal of a primitive, combined the science and sensibility of the twentieth century; who had come fresh to his work unspoilt by any acquaintance with stage conventions. . . . It was like the work of a ten-year-old schoolgirl, and yet the simplicity of its design was so transparently sincere, there was such a feeling of air and space everywhere — the colour of the background was so clear and cool as seen through the brown screen, and above all there were such enchanting arrangements of fruits and flowers painted on the wings, that one forgave all those yards of ugly colour and the impossible furniture."

The curtain rises on Derain's toy shop, with a huge clerk's desk; the blue shades are drawn to discover a stiff painted paddle-wheel steamer on the back drop. The fat storekeeper has his assistant, a bounding imp of a black haired boy, with eyes like shoe-buttons, hair like a mop and a moustache à la Charlot, and they dust up the shop. Ladies and gentlemen of 1870, with their fantastic children come in to buy. Demonstration of performing poodles, Russian toys, tin soldiers and a pair of can-can dancers. These last unfortunates are each bought by different families and are wrapped up to be taken away in the morning. During the night, the animals and toys come to life, assist the lovers to escape; in the morning the irate families return to discover they have been tricked, attack the storekeeper with bottle green parapluies and are routed by the resurrected denizens of the shop — exultation

of the shock-headed assistant — grands jeux; ronde, coda; rideau — and while the large outline of the plotted action comes first to the mind there are those unforgettable details; the horrified gestures of spoilt American children, the kick of the ladies to get their bustles right, the pitiful smirking swagger of the can-can dancer, the distracted tossing abandon of the storekeeper's assistant, all engendered a deliciously conscious overtone, that this is all very ridiculous, but here, in its frame, very true.

The Milieu, the setting of 1870, the introduction of the can-can dancers each has its own significance in the development of the Diaghilev ballet. Part of its charm was its constant sense of the recreation of a mood, as exemplified by an historical epoch, with an ultimate preoccupation with the present. For it was not 1870 that one saw through the enamelled lorgnons of the *Boutique Fantasque*, but a Lanvin lady of 1920 rustling her grandmother's ball dresses. Up to this time the ballet had used a subject matter that was overtly aristocratic: king, slaves and emperors, all the panoplies of princes, or at least the illuminated fairy books of princelings. Now it assumed a higher aristocracy, the remote and special aristocracy of the chic, the familiar texts of the commonplace, seized out of their context, transported to the plane of selection in recreation, and thus rehabilitated.

IV

The development of the ballet is the development of choreography, however much painting and music may contribute to its atmospheric presentation, and by a summary reconsideration of the principal choreographers of the Diaghilev dynasty one can gain an approximate idea of their ultimate achieve-

ment. Mikhail Fokine directly inherited the classical dance. Says André Levinson, that invaluable well of information on such matters: "The classical dance can be succinctly characterized by the use of beats on the points and beats of *elevation.* It contains the traditional symmetrical forms of the *pas de deux,* a choreographical poem in three verses, in a rigid frame work:—the *adagio,* which is a chain of movements and pirouettes by the ballerina supported by the dancer; the two *variations,* that of the ballerina and that of the dancer, whose more restricted art is confined to leaps, the entrechat and series of pirouettes; lastly the *coda,* in which the dancer alternates with the ballerina a succession of accelerated measures that mount up to the *presto* and end in a whirlwind of movements and dizzy complicated turns, crossing the stage diagonally." This of course may have the background of the corps de ballet, whose evolutions are foil and background for the principal dancers. Fokine invented *Les Sylphides* (*Romantic Reverie in one act*) one of the most beautiful of classic ballets in this formal idiom. One remembers swans swimming in late twilight, only the thunder of their wings is muted to swishings of long *tutus,* as paired ladies revolve in a inexpressible gravity of consecutive action in the midst of a shadowy park. But Fokine, with the customary violence of one who so well appreciates the tiresome tradition of his education became a most passionate revolté against it. He embraced the gospel of Isadora with all his body and mind and did his best to inculcate this freedom into the Royal Ballet School. Propert again: "*The Ballet d'Action* in Russia up to 1900 still retained its old form, the story being told by gesture and the dances being treated as interludes, more or less illustrative. By judiciously complicating the plot and multiplying the auxiliary characters, by adding a procession here

and there, and, if possible an apotheosis it was not difficult to spin it out to the regulation four or five acts." Came the Duncan: "She told of the ecstasy of the opening flower and of spirits attuned to the music of the spheres, and in the end her Greek draperies acquired all the significance of a prophet's mantle. . . . . While Fokine disapproved of her indifference to technique he equally disapproved of the others for the misuse they made of it. So he set about to create his own ideals. He imagined a ballet whose romance should go hand in hand with high accomplishment and where the unity of aim of the single dancer should inform the movements of the whole company." Fokine as a reformer was invaluable. As an artist he gave us *Petrouchka* and *Les Sylphides*, but it rested with his followers to rid the ballet of its ingenious tedium, its lack of integration between acted episodes, and those danced and the overemphasis on an elaboration of purely decorative action.

To Vaslav Nijinsky is really due the credit for that specialized quality of dancing which was the eventual contribution of Diaghilev's Ballet. First in his own dances in *Petrouchka* and *Jeux*, later in the *Afternoon of a Faun* and the *Sacre du Printemps* he created an intensity of abstracted intellectual physicality[6] which the rest have developed, modified into

[6] From Cocteau's Notes on the Ballets in the *Decorative Art of Léon Bakst* by Arséne Alexandre, London, 1913. Nijinsky in *Carnaval* "Half Hermes, half harlequin, cat and acrobat by turns, now frankly lascivious, now slyly indifferent, and all the time the school boy up to every trick the turned-down collar of his dress suggests, as emancipated from the control of the laws of gravity as he is mathematically exact in the elaboration of his antic graces. The embodiment of mischief and desire, arrogance and self-satisfaction and a hundred things beside, with the drollest little nods of his head and strange sidelong glances from the shelter of his lids, one shoulder held higher than the other and the cheek bent to meet it, his left hand on his hip, his right palm outstretched. Nijinsky danced his way through *Carnaval* to a din of uninterrupted applause."

something less than its original purity. In addition to the contribution of a great individual technician and the gift of his quality as a person, Nijinsky incorporated Fokine's knowledge of the classical ballet, with his subsequent revolt from it and in addition something of Jacques Dalcroze's eurythmic dancing. If I seem to lean too heavily on Mr. Propert's admirable book, I can only say that it is better to quote him frankly than to do him the injustice of a restatement. "In the *Sacre*[7] we see for the first time the polyrythmic dancing that Dalcroze had suggested. Nijinsky illustrated it by his setting one group of dancers to beat out softly the contrapuntal accompaniment of a theme which was being directly and more forcibly danced by another set."

"Technically the ballet was of extreme interest. It required great courage on the part of Nijinsky to discard every traditional grace that we had learned to expect. . . . . Instead of arms moving in rippling curves we saw them strained rigidly downwards or as rigidly bent at the elbow, and instead of the silence of feet that had seemed scarcely to touch the ground they flew over, we heard the stamping and shuffling of insistant shoes."

Nijinsky lived to originate the idea of the ballet as an organism broken up into interacting members, dancing in relation each to itself and to each other, keeping the time of its unit in relation to the great pulse of the whole. Contrary to what might be expected this does not present the effect of confusion, disordered patches of irrelevant and over-active

[7] From Muriel Draper's *Music at Midnight;* description of the first London performance. "The sight of human beings moving in an abstract geometric design that became a symbol of eternal emotions, beyond-human in its effect, increased the force with which the music invaded you. When it ceased, people broke and ran, sat motionless and unapproachable, cried with rage and assaulted sensibilities. (You call that *art* do you? You call it *music?* 'My God' rushed to the bar for a drink or tried to laugh it away.)"

limbs, but rather a subtle shifting of an everchanging pattern which weaves triply a rhythm, movement, and color into a human tapestry of ordered and profound complexity. His feverish activity in the invention of three ballets in a year and a half at the age of twenty-three besides his insistent appearances on the stage finally cracked him, but it provided Massine, Balanchine and Lifar with a contribution of combinations and an idiom no less important than the original five positions.

V

Fokine freed the ballet from the chains of a sterile academism; Nijinsky gave it the language of an intellectual complexity; it was left to Leonid Massine then at the age of eighteen to integrate the gifts of his predecessors. Massine's first great contribution was in *Parade*, a ballet in one act by Jean Cocteau; music by Eric Satie, scenery and costumes by Pablo Picasso; produced in 1917. The literary and philosophical background of the ballet is sufficiently complicated to justify a quotation from Cocteau's own description of it.[8] For *Parade* was the *Sacre* of the Middle Diaghilev period — the period of the Parisian *dadas*, the heirs of Guillaume Appollinaire — which resulted eventually in such more pretentious ballets as Nabokoff's *Ode*. Cocteau is perennially occupied with the alchemy of the familiar, the rehabilitation of the commonplace. The consciousness of one's own epoch so amazingly acute in the twentieth century, reaches its apogee in him. With Satie and Picasso he wished to present to us a poem of ordinaries, of such usual types that only by their isolation and caricature are they surprised out of banality, and in their escape lies our interest. The mood of

[8] The Collaboration of *Parade* from "Cock and Harlequin," by Jean Cocteau.

Parade is that of the exterior of a provincial fair; the platform outside side-show booths before the exhibition starts. It is the mood of the commencement of all harangues, specious, but tacitly specious, and the audience as well as the actors are painfully conscious of the deception.

"*For Reality Alone, even when well concealed, has power to arouse emotion.*

"The Chinaman pulls out an egg from his pigtail, eats and digests it, finds it again in the toe of his shoe, spits fire, burns himself, stamps to put out the sparks, etc. . . . .

"The little girl mounts a race-horse, rides a bicycle, quivers like pictures on the screen, imitates Charlie Chaplin, chases a thief with a revolver, boxes, dances a rag-time, goes to sleep, is shipwrecked, rolls on the grass on an April morning, buys a kodak, etc.

"As for the acrobats . . . . the poor stupid agile acrobats — we tried to invest them with the melancholy of a Sunday evening after the circus when the sounding of *Lights Out* obliges the children to put on their overcoats again, while casting a last glance at the 'ring.'

"Erik Satie's orchestra abjures the vague and the indistinct. It yields all their grace, without pedals. It is like an inspired village band.

"I composed, said Satie modestly, a background for certain noises which Cocteau considers indispensable in order to fix the atmosphere of his characters."

Here indeed was something else again. Suggestive and atmospheric, *Parade* had perhaps more to do with poetry and philosophy than dancing but it was the seed from which the full-blown flower of the ballet would at last blossom and die. Here was no quaintness of such a work as the *Boutique Fantasque*. The quality of the strangeness here, its peculiar

"quaintness" was a provincial nostalgia, a love and a loathing for the contemporary moment, the epoch of the daily paper and the telegraph, in itself sufficiently diffuse as to be generally incomprehensible—but in its effect extremely powerful. Much of the dancing here was allowed to disintegrate into ponderous shufflings, the painting into chaos and the music into a series of negligible noises; — but in its exquisite snobbery, in its ecstasy of precious eclectism, it presupposed the culmination of whole traditions of all the arts, to give point and pathos to their perversion here. And about this time, in spite of its *succés de estime*, its comparative financial success, and its crowded houses, the professional wise-acres started prophesying the ultimate downfall of the ballet or announcing its death as a fait accompli. But Diaghilev was usually cleverer than his critics. His excursions into the eccentric were guided by a prescience of style that was uncanny. Perhaps he created the ensuing style. It surely followed his wake with extraordinary alacrity. Diaghilev still kept *Igor* and *Sylphides* in his repertory, he still had his troupe dance *Carnaval* and *Petrouchka*, *The Afternoon of a Faun* and the *Sacre*. But the public, to make up for their original antagonisms, clutched their hard earned preferences all the tighter to their habitual taste and were reluctant to accept any further innovation. The lesson of the past in relation to experiment seems never to be learned. Perhaps the initial antagonism provides the spring of release for the new work. At any rate Diaghilev followed *Parade* with such ballets as *Romeo and Juliet*, the rehearsal of a ballet in itself; with *Pastorale*, the filming of a moving picture, in which the premier danseur entered on a clever bicycle as a telegraph messenger. His excursions into native iconography in England were perhaps less fortunate but surely as elaborate. In *The Triumph of Neptune*

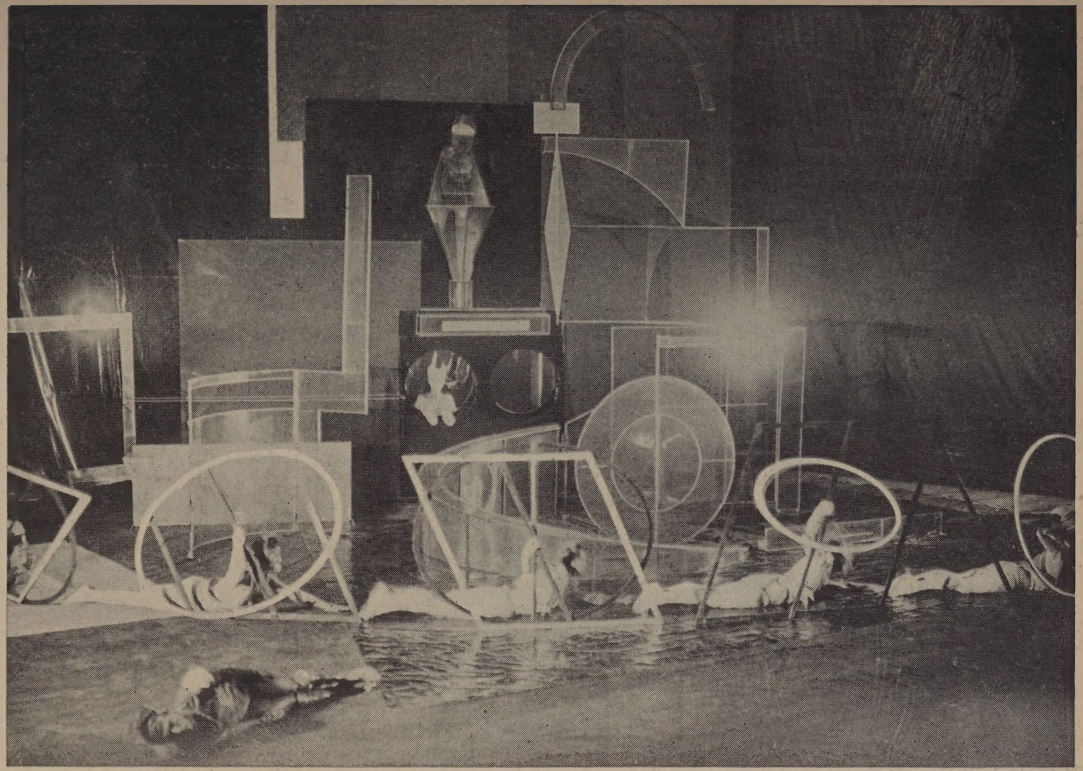
Diaghilev, the Sitwells and the scenery of Pollock's passementerie theatres of the early Victoria, evolved a ballet lacking the distinction of similar French creations. Perhaps the English legend itself wanted the kind of raciness to which Diaghilev was accustomed. This, only to show that he was by no means unerring or always successful. His England is the usual decorative England of the continental — stuffy, suggestive of wet tweeds, and foggy afternoons, bound volumes of Punch, Dickens; later of du Maurier. *Le Romantisme puéril d'un peuple des grands enfants rieurs, querelleurs et crédules est admirablement rendu,* says M. André Levinson, *par les décors, coloriages ombres à la plume, imagerie naive agrandie a l'échelle de la scène.* But in passing it is only fair to say that it was England and not France which supported the ballet in the last days of its existence, and it was England and not France that had talked of a national home for the ballet had Diaghilev lived.

Massine was also responsible for two ballets which combined a felicity of dramatic action with a grace of choreography that had not been seen before. The *Good Humored Ladies* retained the wit of Goldoni but never resorted to the archeology of a mere commedia dell'arte and the *Three Cornered Hat* more than recalls Alcaron, but it is a dramatic dance, rather than a mimed play. For many these combinations of continuous coherent action marked the height of invention in the ballet. It was surely a comprehensible, beautiful and intelligent expression in itself, and these ballets never tired in repetition, but the quality of invention they expounded was shown so exhaustively and inevitably in these two ballets, that it was immediately obvious that the development of choreography lay in other directions.

Massine's most fortunate invention was, perhaps, *Les Mate-*

lots, music by Auric, decor by Pruna — and as originally danced with Lopokova, Danilova, Slavinsky and Wizikowsky is — with *Apollo, The House Party, The Cat* and *Sylphides*—in the top hierarchy of the later Diaghilev repertoire. The stage had simple curtains of dull red, brown, blue, and side-strips of white. A large cube like an enormous toy block had its four sides painted with cupids, lovers, a ship, a lonesome lass, which, turning, accentuated the incident, giving the narrative key as the action progressed. It was danced by six people alone. The young girl, her girl-friend, sailors and a musician who lead the final triumphant dancing-march with a tin-fork and spoon. The Matelots are Parisian blue-jackets; blue and white barred shirts, blue cap with the red pom-pom and tight, revealing trousers. The girl is a Catholic maiden of passive charm and haughty receptivity; her confidante an eager wench, a matter-of-fact shop front lass. Its simple plot — of betrothal, farewell, reappearance in disguise (three attachable beards and a pipe), the test of devotion and the triumph of love is the basis for the action. All the otherwise inexpressible, romantic charm attendant on seafaring men from Ulysses and Sinbad to Ishmael and any common seamen on Riverside Drive of a Sunday afternoon, their loose leggedness, bravado, their talent for gaming, the breadth and gesture of their leer, thumb back, low grin, legs out, find a frame, a defining stylization here. The movements are abrupt, surprising, yet always bear some implication or reference to natural gestures, whether the sailors dance with deal chairs, or slap imaginary cards on the ground, or hitch their pants or support their girls with that ghostly echo of a posture which betrays the rigidity of the classic regimen beneath it all. Massine had taken the greatest pains in the episodic transitions, the hint of comedy, the suspicion of sad-

The Cat, 1927 Serge Lifar and Alice Nikitina



(*Serge Lifar*)

The Cat: Final Scene

(*Photo, Manuel*)

(*Serge Lifar*)

The Prodigal Son, 1929 (*Photo, Lipnitski*)

ness, the nostalgia of expectancy, so that the dramatic unit is a symphony of the poetry in human situation.

Massine at present designs the dances for Roxy's ballet in New York. In this position of considerable importance, it is a pity he has not more power to exercise his amazing ingenuity and his splendid talents as a great original dancer. At least he has been given the chance to arrange the dances for the League of Composers' production of the *Rites of Spring* this April. Massine was the first of the "clever" choreographers.[9] A perfect classical dancer, he took an almost pedantic delight in perverting or satirizing the old formal steps. He introduced a kind of stylish rigidity, a conscious gaucherie, which his followers were often to transmit into an ingenious pattern of meaningless surprises as empty as the original academic formula on which it was based.

VI

And then there was Diaghilev himself, a personality of the utmost distinction, combining in his fantastic character elements of practical facility, capacity for action and an exu-

[9] A typical example of the more outrageous Massine, the Massine at whose door some laid the decadence of the ballet was the production of *Mercure* at Beaumont's Soirée de Paris — described in the *Criterion* by W. H. Shaw. "*Mercure* left one uncertain. The effect produced on the first night audience was indicative. The younger generation led by Louis Aragon became so excited that they leapt from their seats, running through the theatre to the loge of the Comte de Beaumont, screaming in menacing tones 'Vive Picasso! Vive Picasso,' as if uncertain whether to thank or damn him for presenting anything so thrilling. . . . The curtain rose on a tableau representing night in a manner entirely new to Picasso, an abstract composition made of canvas and wire. The three graces were done by three mechanical figures which were many times as large as the dancers who carried them across the stage. The dance of Chaos was executed by a group of dancers entirely covered by different colored tights, reaching even over their faces, crawling across the stage, supporting other dancers on their heads and backs."

berant invention which made the ballet possible. M. Henry Prunière described him thus in his memorial written at the time of his death: "Those who did not know him cannot imagine the extraordinary attraction of this big, snub-nosed man, with the enormous head, the black hair parted with a large white lock, heavy jaws, sensual lips, fine eyes of velvet darkness. He wore a monocle and had a slouching walk like the Monsieur de Charlus portrayed by Marcel Proust." It was inevitable that a legend should have grown up about him in his life, and of necessity it was on a grand scale parallel to his creations. He was reputed to be at once the wickedest and kindest man in Europe, both the stupidest, the most vulgar, the shrewdest and the most smart. Perhaps by quoting Lydia Lopokova who knew him better than most, one can realize some segment of his mercurial temperament. "Then there was his cunning with which he knew how to combine the excellent with the fashionable, the beautiful with the *chic,* and revolutionary art with the atmosphere of the old regime. Perhaps this corresponded to something in his own nature. In spite of his love for the *dernier cri* and the emancipation of his taste, no one could ever have called Diaghilev a 'highbrow.' He was an orthodox-believer, and devoted slave of Emperors and Kings. Indeed, he was a convinced snob, and it was not only thoughts of the box office which made him so spry and contented when the King of Spain, the Duke of Connaught or even the Aga Khan was in the theatre! He was superstitious; charms, potions, love-philtres were not entirely outside his mentality." He indulged himself equally in his passion for puppies, for Machiavellian intrigue, and for four-handed arrangements of Glinka and Cimarosa. In trying to recollect those qualities which made his success possible Lopokova first cites his extraordinary authority, as

ruthless as the traditional Romanoff, whose blood was supposed to flow in his veins. As she says, it was no easy task to get such a three ring circus as Rimsky, Stravinsky, Prokoviev, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Auric, Milhaud, De Falla, Respighi, Strauss and Mattise, Braque, Dérain, Laurencin, Utrillo, Gris, Rouault, Picasso, Bakst, Chirico, and Pavlova, Karsavina, Bolm, Nijinsky, Mordkin, Dolin and Lifar to work together. The difficulties in the way of savage professional jealousies, procrastination from both musical and artistic supports, and recurrent and insistent bankruptcy which Diaghilev surmounted, are heroic chapters in his saga, which, so vital to his success, will of necessity be forgotton. Naturally he made enemies. His increasing power had become dictatorial. He could make the reputation of a painter, a musician or a dancer in a single night. "And lastly," wrote Lopokova, "as the force without which I think, the rest could not have been enough, there was the personal motive of his successive attachments to Nijinsky, Massine, and Lifar. It was his unceasing preoccupation to educate, inspire, and develop the natural talents of these dancers and choreographs to the utmost limit of their possiblities. It would be half true to say that all this energy was exercised, the great Opera Houses of the world rented, and the most famous musicians and artists commissioned in order that a splendid *ensemble* might be created for their setting off, that glory should surround their triumphs and the most perfect opportunities be offered for their self-expression." Muriel Draper in regretting the passing of the ballet gives an unforgettable picture of Diaghilev at a rehearsal. "Abortive democratic principles, the socialization of the arts for the standardized benefit of the prolific 'brotherhood' of man, the lack of one great figure to dominate so many interrelated parts of the world as have been thrown pell-mell

together, all these currents have accelerated the temporary eclipse of the grand scale. . . . They are losing the code, and with a universal increase of intelligence and technical virtuosity that is in almost exact inverse ratio to standards of value, there is little left that can be presented on the grand scale. What there is of it Diaghilev captured and salvaged. I have sat with him in almost empty theatres during rehearsal and heard him say to the chef d'orchestre very politely —

"'*Non, non, non maître. Pas tout à fait ça. . . . Pas tout à fait ça. Est-ce que je me trompe, ou est-ce que ce n'est pas un tout petit trop. . . . trop lent? En tout cas, essayons-le un to-o-out petit peu plus vite. C'est bien possible que j' ai tort.*' Or to a dancing figure on the stage, '*Non, Non, Non ma chère petite. Non. L'estomac n'est pas fait de bois — attendez, attendez, écoutez-moi — ni de caoutchouc. Non, chère, non. L'estomac est fait de la chair, aprés tout, de la bonne chair.*' And so on and so on until by a series of almost chemical emanations rather than actual directions, he had changed the atomic structure of bodies, scenes and sounds."

"I once asked him if he could express in words the exact thing of which he was possessed that brought about this subtle synthesis of flesh and light and tone vibration.

"'*Je ne sais pas, je ne sais pas, ma chère Muriel, je ne sais pas. Un toouout petit peu de la conaissance, peut être, et beaucoup de l'amour . . . . Je ne sais pas.*' "

Daighilev had his court and for twenty years at least he was king of the European arts. A beneficent despot, the power of his unified and isolated authority, with the exception of the Bavarian King's Wagnerian interlude, has parallels only in the eighteenth century and before, when Boucher and LeBrun created an academy and a taste. It is something to have recreated the art of dancing, to have given painting

practically its only escape from easel-painting, to have provided music with the proper channels to exploit its polyphonic dissonances and return to melodic line. Diaghilev did more. He created a taste in and of his own period, he set up the only referable standards of aesthetic excellence in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and provided the only great market for a unified creative endeavor. Two things he loved to idolatry: the physical aura of youth in action; the intellectual brilliance of surprise. He was a king, who created not empires, but a world, who defined with a synthesis of men and their arts, with the transitions of movement in mass, color and music a nobility that had no other way of being demonstrated. Diaghilev's style was more than a modish fashion, an ephemeral chic. Unique in itself, it expressed the same aristocracy of perception and intensity, usually with tragic overtones, that all great artists have known and erected. While watching a ballet one could say simply, "There lies nobility, grace, perfection." With words this style is definable, but the very symbols that read abstractions traduce its essence. In the grave sobriety, the untiring effortless fountain of Mozart, in the ironic and passionate delicacy of Greco; in such gay and heroic characterizations as Mercutio's and Hotspur's; in the cadences of Racine and Congreve, and in the elegance of Wren and Bernini, there is that living, tremendous exuberance of human divinity which so often the Diaghilev ballet tangibly and triumphantly expressed. In recreating the past whether in Russia, or Versailles, in seizing from the present its most precious seconds whether at a house party,[10] a tennis

[10] *Les Biches*, choreography by Nijinska (sister of the dancer), music by Poulenc, décor by Marie Laurencin, was surely one of the happiest of all ballets, the perfect definition of the charm of contemporaneity in relation to tradition. The music with its lovely parody of Caesar-Franck, the boys in sashed blue bathing suits, the ladies in pink, grey and black garden party dresses; the

game (Nijinsky and Debussy's *Jeux*), or a factory, Diaghilev chose the best of life's stream, presented it to those living who could best receive it, in the most fitting of all possible forms.

VII

If the choreography of the first Russian ballets was characterized by its massive emphasis on colorful loose dancing, chaotic gesture, a narrative sequence in action and a romantic reaction from the strictures of the five classical positions, the last Russian ballets were distinguished by the reverse. Its development had run the logical gamut from the intense and reactionary romanticism of Mikhail Fokine to the intense and reactionary classicism of Georges Balanchine (Balanchavadze). For it was he and not Massine who determined the indicative line of the last ballets, although he depended on Massine as much as Massine originally on Fokine. In its first years the by-words of ballet were "grace," "beauty of movement," "line," meaning roughly, smooth transitions from one balanced position to another. Under Massine, with his incorporations of various extraneous influences, such as music-hall[11] and musical comedy dancing, this grace was replaced by a certain abruptness, clipped gestures, strained final posi-

entrance also of Nemtchinova so well described by Cocteau;—the type of the perfect entrance. "L'entrée de Nemtchinova est proprement sublime. Lorsque cette petite dame sort de la coulisse, sur ses pointes, avec de longues jambes, un justaucorps trop court, la main droite, gantée en blanc, mise prés de la joue comme pour un salut militaire, mon coeur bat plus vite ou s'arrête de battre. Ensuite, un gout sans flechissement combine les pas Classiques et les gestes neufs."

[11] In Cocteau's *Boeuf sur le Toit*, the three Fratellinis, star clowns of the Cirque d'Hiver, were taken over to mime the leading roles. How admirable an American ballet would be, music by Cole Porter, with the addition of Clayton, Jackson and Durante, whose precision, tempo and irony approximate the later Russian ballets in essence more than anything else in America.

tions, so awkward in themselves that they immediately and satirically recalled the smooth attitudes which they burlesqued. Generally taken to be awkward and gauche, they seemed to many, rather, stylish, pointed, accentuating, accenting those gestures which in their customary slippery sequence had lost any isolated meaning. Massine was accused of designing ballets with an excess of movement, in so much as the eye never was at leisure. His introduction of acrobatics as in *Mercure* was generally deplored. Such vulgarisms were not only displeasing to the smoothly trained eye, but they *ruined the dancers* for such delicate work as in the classical *Sylphides*, which is to say that Schönberg or Satie ruins one's fingers for Chopin or Tschaikowsky. But Massine's real forte was in his comic scenes, the Italian and Spanish deceptions, the barbed wit, and brilliant personal deceit of Goldoni and Alcaron.

Balanchine's triumphs were the *Cat*, the *Prodigal Son*, the *Ball* and *Apollo, Leader of the Muses*. The ballet disintegrated after Diaghilev's death, and perhaps circumstances will not allow the full development of this brilliant choreographer, who must certainly have developed into one of the ablest of all Diaghilev's designers, for not only was his energy and invention prodigious — but he well understood the dangers attendant on the unintelligent if entertaining implications of the "clever," acrobatic Massine dance, and in the *Cat* and *Apollo* he produced two of the finest of all the ballets since their inception. His dances had the spareness, the lack of decoration which is by no means a lack of refinement, the splendid capacity to display individual gesture against a background of unrythmical massed gesture. Sometimes his ingenuity ran away with him, as in the *Prodigal Son* when four lines of dancers are ranged as on a grandstand, and their

hands shoot out like the struck letters of a typewriter in a sequence which is distinguished only as a surprise. Or as in the same ballet, when the shaven men pair off back to back, then slide down until they are sitting against each other on air, and scuttle off sideways like a battalion of crabs. These of course were intended as semi-satirical accents, but they had the same undesirable effect as an over-elaborate image in a poem, which throws off the continuous emphasis of the piece as a whole. It is true he engaged in acrobatics, and influences from the music hall as well. But he had an excellent precedent for such borrowings. Did not Nijinsky and Fokine borrow from Dalcroze and Isadora, and Massine from Spanish folk dances; and the can-can of the Moulin de la Galette; and the Valser of the Prater. The Ballet of Balanchine was more difficult to follow, perhaps, required more of an effort, in so much as the human eye accepts more readily easy variations, just as the human ear accustoms itself more readily to tones in transitions bounded by the more obvious tonal intervals. Extremely apropos of Balanchine are the words of M. Valerian Svetloff: "I have always maintained that an art fixed immovably in its forms is doomed. I have said that Fokine, by his great talent, has stirred the classicism of Petipa out of its inertia, has given it new life, for classicism is the source of the art of the ballet." The last period of the ballet was and must be considered a period of transition, not of decadence. Balanchine in the *Cat* and in *Apollo* was leading out of mere ingenuity into a revivified, purer, cleaner classicism. He had drawn on his predecessors, and with the utilization of his own peculiar invention, had created a classical ballet as pure as *Sylphides* or the *Swan Lake,* but with more depth of emotional intensity. Who having seen it will ever forget the *Cat?* When the curtain rose on Gabo and Pevsner's construction in

mica, steel and black oil cloth, a group of young men arranged in tandems of four, bore on their collective backs, their leader, Lifar, the new Nijinsky. The music of Henry Sauget *Je ne suis pas de mon époque*, he said: — it is indeed rather that of a more acrid Offenbach — crashed out the chords of a prancing entrance and the human chariot deposited its load in the centre of the stage. The young man prays Aphrodite, an implacable divinity of isinglass and white, to suffer his beloved, a cat, to come to life. His prayer is granted and thence, Nikitina, her *tutu* covered with a layer of isinglass, floats on to the scene in an entrance of exquisite, and indescribable delicacy, gravity and precision. The dances are of the older sort, combinations of attitude, entrechat, rond de jambe, pas de basque, etc., of the strict regime. But with what tragic overtones is this rigid idiom invested, when Aphrodite to test the love of the cat-girl sends a mouse across the stage. She reverts to type, following it off the floor to assume her white mittens and mask of cat. How desperately the young man is caught by his overwhelming grief, how he shivers his life away, until he falls on his side, head painfully unrelaxed off the ground in rigor-mortis. Then his companions file in, bearing skeletons of great shields, whose shifting outlines, more than their own bodies describe his funeral march, and he is borne off, over their heads, music, setting, dancing, maintaining an atmosphere of pure tragedy, an exaltation of loss which can only be described as Attic.

Apollo, Leader of the Muses was even sparer, more remote. The god with hair of gilt enamel, chitoned in crimson silk, danced with Terpsichore, Polymnia and Calliope, each dressed by Chanel in the most touching of divine chiffons, cinctured by striped Charvet cravats, as perennially fashionable in the faubourg St. Germain as on the uplands of Olym-

pus. Here were the old pas d'action, variations and combinations ending in the customary apotheosis, when the sun god's harnessed chariot comes out of the sky for him.

There is no plot. The inspiring of the Muses is a sufficient subject for dances in the old style, with all the emphasis on easy formal transition, a delicacy in the extended line of the body that is by no means a reversion to nineteenth-century choreography, for just as Stravinsky's music transcended Delibes and Tschaikowsky, through the *Sacre* or no matter what, so Balanchine has transcended Petipa, by way of *Prince Igor, Les Matelots* and the *Boutique Fantasque*. Always in the last analysis the classical dance is the most satisfactory, its cold multiplication of a thousand embroideries, divested of the personal, if more romantic charm of pantomime—never become cloying. One may love a ballet of surprise just as much, perhaps, after the first astonishment at decor or invention wears off, but in ballets like *Apollo*, the slight crassness that accompanies elaborate conceit never detracts from the nobility of the unerring linear architecture. This ballet more than any other indicated the direction of Balanchine's ultimate attack. Lifar, the premier danseur, famous for his acrobatics, had proclaimed his decided attraction not to the ingenious complications of the *Ball* and the *Prodigal Son* but to the classical choreography of the Masters Petipa, Legat and Cechetti. This winter he arranged and danced Beethoven's *Prometheus* at the Opera in Paris which gives some glimmer to the future of the dance.

For to many the future of the dance is very black indeed. To be sure there is an enormous interest in dancing today; witness the extravagant success of the Denishawns, Kreutzberg, Argentina and the score of Sunday evening entertainers foreign and indigenous. The Denishawns have some interest

in their reproduction of eastern dances, but purely the interest of a good copy; Kreutzberg has only the subjective fascination of post-war German painting; of Pierrot-Lunaire. Argentina defines the limits of a perfection which is by nature of itself, limited. The rest, such dancers as attempt "reforms" in the classical ballet—Wigman, Bodenwieser, Laban, and their American parallels — lack the two chief necessities of fine dancing—a formal training and a sense of the aristocracy of style. Solo dancers are never as effective as with the background of a ballet, and the aimless emotional vacuity, the appalling facility of loose gesture under the guise of free dancing that we find in most Americans are far less interesting than the precision of Albertina Rasch or a Tiller corps.

As M. Valerian Svetloff says: "Talent is an all-embracing spirit, it is contented with seven notes, seven primary colours and five positions in dancing; with these it will perform marvels in art, such marvels as will remain young when the present generation, and those that follow it, are in their graves." The classical ballet, once its idiom is incorporated in the mind of the dancer, transcends the heavy self-consciousness of naturalistic dancing, which is always intent on translating the postures of "natural" walking and running into the language of the dance. But in walking and running for example, the feet and hands are blunt ends, to arrest the flow of lines; by a stylized lengthening of them as in ballet, the eye carries the linear transition easily. For classical ballet dancing is at once the most rigid and elastic of bodily expression. It is the Catholic absolute dogma of the dance — to be sure there are the Calvinists, the Christian Scientists, and lesser creeds without the law; messengers of beauty in batik draperies, bearing paper hydrangeas in a card-board urn. They lack the hardness, the muscular accuracy, the coördinated precision of those

dancers trained at the bar. Their repertoire is always looser, less coherent, less integrated. The world needs a new Diaghilev to reintegrate the arts, but to save dancing in particular from a facile oblivion.

It is, of course, somewhat pointless to attempt the description of the ballet to one who has never seen it, whose only connection with formal dancing is the "prologue" to a moving picture or the interlude of a musical comedy. It is hard to convey the feeling of loss one has, having seen it, fearing never to see it again. But it is exactly the same as if one were deprived of a literature, a whole language of expression; for instance to wake up one morning and know one could never read Tolstoi or Proust or Shakespeare again, never to see Poussin, Greco, or Cézanne, never again Gabrielle's Garde Meuble on the Place de la Concorde, or Chartres, or San Marco, never hear again the B Minor Mass or *Don Giovanni.*

VIII

And the social reverberations of the ballet were not wholly negligible; in the minds of some at least there were serious moral implications. If at the first great nights at the Chatelet the audience included Geraldine Farrar, M. Briand, Isadora Duncan, Gabriel Fauré, Grand Duke Pavel, Caillaux, Saint Saëns, Octave Mirabeau, the last nights in London were beheld by an equivalent aristocracy of art, letters, and politics. During the intermissions, Miss Sitwell held her court on Covent Garden stairs, to block the upward passage of the Poet Laureate. Prince George sits in a corner with an unknown lady elaborately unobserved. The latest meteors down from Oxford and Cambridge swell the large and androgynous cohorts of intelligent enthusiasts, and these have startled the

jeremiads of that nervous Savonarola, Mr. Whyndam Lewis. He fulminated against the ballet as the ultimate snobbish and vapid bagatelle of high-Bohemia, the vile afterbirth of the purple nineties. But what Mr. Lewis really objected to was the sight of a great many more or less wicked young people enjoying themselves, contrasting (favorably, no doubt) the formal perfection of the ballet with the formal corruption of their own lives. The gossip that buzzed around its corridors was as lively, as professional, as malicious as at Trianon. One can only hope that there were St. Simons on both sides of the channel during the last twenty years. For, S. (a delightful dancer of some seasons ago) disappeared with a Finnish lady and contracted leprosy: rewards of the narrow path. There is being kept in abeyance a dancer greater than Nijinsky to replace the present favorite. He was found on the top of a Steppe and has been educated at Diaghilev's expense for fifteen years. Stravinsky's orthodox Mass has been refused. Marcovich, the sixteen-year-old musician, will definitely emerge from his obscurity to replace Stravinsky. The composer in a dudgeon has withdrawn the rights on all his ballets. Diaghilev is bankrupt, only the generosity of Lord Beaverbrook keeps him at Covent Garden; Stravinsky's Mass will be produced in Monte Carlo in the spring. In spite of the antagonistic critical silence in all the Beaverbrook press, the present season is, bless God, a financial success; now X, Y, Z, and so on can be paid. But the extraordinary thing about this gossip was the high degree of technical and personal information it presupposed. The audiences of the ballet had been reared in it. They were as willing to talk about an entrance, a new invention or elision in the choreography, as to scandalize about the dancers. There was no necessity of explanatory lectures, program notes. And the intelligence, the

quickness to perceive, the willingness to follow wherever adventures of the mind, the ear, the eye led, made possible amazing voyages in invention, and all the explorations of Diaghilev and his ballet. Equally on the stage, the insistence on a hierarchy of social values accomplished marvels. There was the implicitly accepted favorite of Diaghilev. There may or may not have been accompanying rancor behind the scenes, the feeling that not merit alone had accomplished a meteoric rise. But on the stage, when good dancing was to be done, there was an intentness of purpose, a passionate intensity at impersonalized abstract perfection, unalloyed by the intrusion of emotional competition. There was no attempt at outdancing one's partner, as so often on our stage actors outplay their supporting company. All the dancers had an exquisite realization of their place in the time, the dress, the atmosphere of the ballet, and of their place, their tempo, their spiritual attitude in dancing. Merely because when lined up at the time of curtain calls the premier danseurs were so frequently smothered with bouquets of carnations, the ladies were no less gracious or adorable for accepting the young men's flowers, torn from their more tangible tributes. The recognition of the proud filling each, in their way, of their proper place, in every relation personal and artistic was that religion, which was the style of the ballet.

The style the Russian ballet embodied was to be sure a peculiar and restricted kind of style, a style of manners, an aristocracy of charm, a selection of all the noblest and most desirable qualities to despite life's darkness, in an eternal living definition of the qualities which we find great in painting, sculpture, music and letters. Words fail at every turn, and one can only rely on such inscribed and immediate beacons to parallel the qualities here to be inferred. The style, the aris-

tocracy of charm the ballet knew so well was known by Poussin in his *Inspiration of the Poet;* Manet in his *Olympia* and Seurat in the *Grande Jatte* felt the style of contemporaneity which had links with all greatness in the past, and the power of such great projection into the future. The graciousness, the swing, the delicacy of such a style was realized by the unknown attic sculptor of the Berlin Goddess bearing a pomegranate; most fittingly in Carpeaux's *Danse.* The grandeur of its kinetic and noble sobriety Monteverde inscribed in *Orfeo;* its playfulness, its geniality Mozart interlined within *Les Petits Riens.* But describing the ballet is more fatuous than even attempting to paint pictures with words. How can one ever suggest the delicacy of pause, the void in action, that gives dance its accent; the vision of arms and legs in exquisite interplay from symmetry to assymetry, from rest to violence, or to feel the ineffable charm, warming one like friendship—to see men and women moving together in a sympathy of gesture, a prescience of progressive action that is at once complete coördination, ease; the poetry of life. And Cocteau's first impression of the ballet is true of a last look and every look; "Their thrilling dances then gave me a sharp pang of yearning to get a closer view of things immeasurable and unattainable, such as no poem of Heine's, no prose of Poe's, no fever dream has ever given me, and, since, I have invariably had the same sensation, at once sub-conscious and acute, which I attribute to the silent and nebulous precision of all they do."

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

TWO SONNETS

I.

Behold you how the sinewed arms' lean grace,
  Reaving oppression of night's spreading pinions,
Trembles to limy bone in the embrace
  And thought rides off to hounds with death's minions.

Comes blear time he spurs on and never back,
  That day bone, thew, and blood shrink past their fiercing
And the moist eager skins dry tough and crack
  Like oak-branch crook-backed cracks at frosty piercing.

O flesh that holds so, keeps so moon-set, star-set,
  Gold-glitter and sweet song for every playing,
Fret not the mind's waste mad with grimy net
  Of thou shalt pay and heavy be the paying;

Fall we as one through these deep fields of night
Whose boundaries westward wing in silent flight.

2.

Point downward, and the days see no regression
on that short journey singing as we go,
or silent and the ready fools of dream.

Seeking forgetfulness upon bright girls,
soliciting the darkness, where Death lives,
with pitiful lost hands; and never finding,
and caught perhaps within a moment's terror
that what is past belief may yet be true.

Always remembering the panting horror
of nights too young for such duplicity . . . .

But this, you say, is I and not my brother
in Christ, and you read right; but have you heard
the step, the shuffling step or seen the sharp
shadow of God about me like a bird?

GENE DE BULLET

APOLOGY FOR MY HEALTH

ONE afternoon when I was home during college vacation my mother asked me if I would give an old toy of mine, a miniature machine shop, to Russell Berg. Usually when she interrupted one of my books I merely continued reading until she walked away. On this occasion, however, I slammed my book shut and jumped up and kissed her and without saying a word climbed four flights to the storage room of our apartment house. I found the dusty cumbersome toy and carried it downstairs and changed my clothes. I was still in extraordinarily good spirits when I boarded an uptown trolley which took me towards the house in which three generations of the Berg family had lived and towards the scenes of my own boyhood. My parents and Russell's had been nextdoor neighbors for over a decade. He and I, being within two months of the same age, had grown up together as children; yet I had not seen him in eight years, or since he was twelve. At nine he had been withdrawn from grammar school and at twelve confined to his home. My mother was one of the few outsiders who had seen him since then, a distinction gained by taking him my old toys as presents — all, over the period of years, except the heavy machine shop. Visits to see him had been discouraged by his parents and, finally, even inquiries about his condition. They wished him to be forgotten and in time he was. — I recall speaking his name years afterwards. It was at the dinner table, after I had finished my first year's

work in psychology, and I was explaining to my parents the three classes of arrested development. Idiots, imbeciles, and morons, I said; then an example occurred to me. Because his mental growth had stopped at the age of nine, Russell Berg, I said, would be classed as an imbecile.

"That's what he is, I'm afraid, he's an imbecile," I repeated. The repetition was cruel; it was a triumph over an old enemy. But the enemy was not Russell; it was his grandmother.

When I recall him deliberately I see his eyes first. They were large and ultramarine. I remember them staring straight up, their lids blinking rapidly. His body lay across a circle that had been drawn in the dust with a stick, where he had fallen during a game of marbles in an epileptic fit. This was not his first fit, therefore not altogether a surprise to the boys silently waiting for foam to gather on his lips. As I was his closest friend and his champion I took charge of him; and when his grandmother arrived I helped her walk him home. She had been dressing and had run into the street with no skirt, only an opalescent petticoat that showed the hollows of her knees. I could not keep from looking at them, though with a fierce puerile scorn. Her legs were well known in our neighborhood, for she was an ancient flirt and liked to pull up her dress on summer evening porches and jokingly solicit the approval of the men. She also delighted in naughty stories. Her name was Mrs. Weber. The family was German, well-to-do, and Protestant.

When I recall Mrs. Weber deliberately I remember how she was envious of my reputation for scholarship and spread the report one September that I wanted to return to school. This is only a slight and rather amusing example of her unremitting dislike. It was ingenious of her, for no one believed

my defense, though it was true that I had never opened a schoolbook out of class. I was neither overstudious nor, as she implied, unathletic; every day I called to get Russell to practise for our football team of which I was the captain. As for him, his sole value to the team consisted in being the eleventh man, for we could not be sure of the most rudimentary or natural coöperation from him. It was not unusual for him to help the other side during an important play, or to stop abruptly and begin to fight — often with some member of his own team. Though very quarrelsome, he lost nearly all of his fights, and was hurt, besides, in almost every game he played — mostly by me, his friend and champion. Mrs. Berg was pitied by her friends and I was blamed by Mrs. Weber for his injuries long before any real ailment was suspected, before the rumor of his first fit.

I remember hearing this rumor one winter morning within a few hours after he had fallen down over a heat register while dressing. This was explained later by Mrs. Weber as merely a case of asphyxiation by fumes from the furnace, and at length it was forgotten. Several months must have passed before an incident which his unfortunate family was at difficulties to explain, for it took place in the presence of two witnesses, and I was one. With a boy named Bub, Russell and I had been playing near a shack that we three had built in some woods adjoining our neighborhood. When Russell fell with a strange moan Bub ran at once for help; but I did nothing, I simply stayed and watched Russell's convulsions. Soon Mrs. Berg, Mrs. Weber, and their cook Lizzie came running back with Bub. They showed so much distress and panic that I felt ashamed.

"What did you do to him!" Mrs. Weber demanded of me.

I could not think of any defense. Just before his fall we

had been engaged, he and I, in a duel with horseweed roots, and I had broken his and won. I seriously feared that my success at the duel — I had struck quite savagely near the wrist — might have brought on his fit. Also, I felt ashamed of having merely watched his convulsions. But my deepest shame was of the exulting thrill that had run through me when his infirmity, therefore his certain eclipse, had been assured. After helping to take him home I listened to Mrs. Weber's scolding and Mrs. Berg's thanks in silence. But at my own home I gave an account of the fit to my mother with animation. My mother and I had been strangely united by Mrs. Weber's dislike of me.

The woods in which Russell fell are now a real estate subdivision and not even the site of our shack remains; it is buried almost thirty feet underground, for the woods have been filled in. Yet to judge from a boyhood diary of mine, which I found in the attic a few days ago, I must at one time have spent every fair afternoon beneath the cellars of present-day homes. The origin of what I am writing, in fact, is these woods, for by the suggestion of my diary they reappeared to me, and I remembered throwing a mock orange at Russell during an Antietam refought there; I saw the green fruit crash through a tree, strike his white forehead, and knock him down. It was this memory that began this apology. I thought how often I had hurt him. That was my first idea.

Outdoors we played in these woods; indoors in his home, which was larger and better than mine. Russell owned more playthings than any other boy in town. Most of them had been given him by his grandmother — as an expression, I believed, less of her love for him than of her dislike for me. The most memorable of these gifts was a small billiard table which was installed in what became known as the billiard

room. I particularly recall one Saturday afternoon when I entered the billiard room in a state of sanctifying grace. I had just come from confession and intended to go to communion the next morning at eight o'clock mass. During the period between sacraments I was anxiously on guard against sin, especially unchaste thoughts; I was more than ordinarily impressed by the Church ruling that it is a sacrilege to receive the Host either in a state of mortal sin or after having eaten or drunk since midnight on communion day. On a Sunday morning when I was about to receive the Eucharist I brushed my teeth with my head bent forward, so that no water might run down my throat. If I were tempted I whispered a short prayer to the Virgin in my breath.

I found Russell and Bub in the billiard room, and we began a game. After a while Mrs. Weber and Mrs. Berg stopped at the door and watched us play. I made the winning shot.

While we were preparing to begin another game Mrs. Weber declared that Russell and Bub should team against me. "You're the oldest. You ought to let them do that," she said to me. I tried to protest that their scores in the last game, if combined, would have been much higher than mine and that, besides, I was only two months older than Russell; but whether by pretense or sincerely she seemed to be quite unable to understand what I meant.

"All right, let them," I said finally.

"Everybody's against you," Mrs. Berg said to me. "I'm going to be on your side."

During the game Russell unexpectedly switched up his grandmother's skirts with his cue and cried out: "Take a good look, gents! She's always showing them!" A little later he aimed his cue at her from behind, but it fell his turn

just then to play. He was coaxed to devote himself to the game. But soon afterwards he stopped a few inches from my face and said with a grin: "What are you so quiet about? He's just been confessing his sins to the priest. He's afraid to say anything, he's afraid it'll be dirty. He wants to gobble the wafer[1] tomorrow morning."

I played grimly and might have made the winning shot if Mrs. Weber had not spoken while I aimed. Although I had three chances afterwards I failed each time through anger and anxiety. Bub ended the game, and because it was rather late every one started to leave the room. I was unable, however, to repress a question with which I had been struggling. "Mrs. Weber," I asked, "why is it that you hate me? I don't mean the game, that's over. Just, why is it that you hate me so much?"

"Why, I don't hate you," she said. "What ever made you think that? I thought we were just good friends, you and I. I didn't know you had any ideas like that." She took my hand and held it against her breast.

I wished very much I had not spoken. The others also were embarrassed and continued going out of the room. Mrs. Weber and I were left alone.

"I didn't mean what I said.—I'll take it back," I offered.

"Why, I thought we were just good friends, you and I," she repeated reproachfully.

We stood there in silence a long time. She continued to hold my hand. Afterwards, during the hours of reflection which I gave to that minute, I felt pretty sure that my

[1] While rereading this page I was struck by the above expression which at first was set down, at the dictation of my memory, without fear of any one's doubt. I hope now that its reality will be believed. Though I have not the space to introduce those sides of his character here, Russell possessed genuine insight at times as well as a knack of violent phrase.

mother's passing suspicion — that Mrs. Weber was a renegade Catholic—had been confirmed; for she seemed to have understood as no one born Protestant would have understood that if I were to be led to have unchaste thoughts I should be ineligible for communion the next day. That night in bed I grew convinced of my sin. The next morning, rather than admit my uncertainty to my mother or risk a sacrilege, I drank a glass of water as though by mistake, and did not take the Host.

But I must go back to Russell's eyes, for I have just recalled them again with a pang, as though I have been neglecting something important. I remember holding his temples between my hands and peering into his eyes. The pupil of the left was notched at the top. This must have been some time after a day when he and I called for Bub to get up a game of scrub baseball. While waiting for Bub to appear, as he was keeping our only ball at that time, Russell picked up a stone which we began to pass back and forth in Bub's yard, for we were wearing our baseball gloves. Without warning Russell threw the stone with all his speed at my head. Though we were barely fifteen feet apart I caught it. An instant before throwing it back I feinted with my glove. Then I returned it gently, but he was upset both by the trick and his fear of missing. The stone sailed slowly through his hands into his left eye. There was one drop of crimson on his ultramarine iris. I bent over him: he held his eye open for me to see.

I ran to his home which was two doors away. Mrs. Berg and Mrs. Weber were hostesses that afternoon to a bridge game. I went straight to Mrs. Berg's table.

"Russell's blind!" I cried.

By that time his continual misfortunes were well known in

our neighborhood. Several members of the bridge club ran back with me, wriggling through a hedge rather than take a longer way. Mrs. Weber tried to leap this hedge and fell down. I helped her up.

"What did you do to him!" she whispered, out of breath. She wrenched her elbow out of my grasp after regaining her feet.

When she had seen his eye she turned at once to me. "What made you throw at him?"

"He catches butterfingered. That's how it happened," I explained.

"What do you mean by that?"

"He holds his hands this way instead of this."

"It doesn't matter how he holds his handses. What made you throw at him? What were you trying to do, were you trying to put his eyes out?"

"It's only one eye," I mumbled.

"What's that?"

I did not repeat what I had said.

"It's only one eye? Did you hear that!" she said to the other women.

"Come on, Mother, stop quarrelling," Mrs. Berg said.

"I'm not quarrelling, I just want to find out why any one would want to put poor Russell's eyes out."

"I'll help you, Mrs. Berg," I offered; but there seemed to be nothing for me to do.

Russell was taken in an automobile to a private eye hospital and operated on within an hour. It was said later that this dispatch saved his eye; the only injury was the notching of the pupil. It was an expensive operation for which my father could not have offered to pay even a share. I cried two hours that afternoon. I did not avail myself of the defense that he

had tried first to hit me with the stone, I simply blamed myself. That day when I assumed such an undue portion of guilt and apology now seems to me to have left an indelible stamp on my character. And it may explain why in recalling Russell I saw his eyes first.

Of course, I did not think of these things on the street car while taking my old toy to Russell. Even after ringing the Berg's doorbell and being admitted by Lizzie I had not experienced one of the memories that are written down here. Those came later. I put the toy on a hall table and waited in the living room. Mrs. Berg came downstairs carrying a neuralgic arm in a black silk sling. In spite of her family's repeated illnesses and misfortunes, her daughter's death, her mother's tyranny, the years she had devoted to Russell, her own bad health, and the remorse she was supposed to have felt since Russell's condition had been traced by a specialist to the large quantities of champagne which had been given her during her pregnancy — in spite of all this she looked fresh and unweary. She examined the parts of the machine shop — its triphammers, engine, lathe, grindstone, belts, etc. — with real enthusiasm and with more intelligence in such matters than mine.

"He could turn matchsticks on that little lathe," she said.

Mrs. Weber came downstairs.

"Why how do you do!" she greeted me.

She also examined and admired my gift, and then passed into the living room.

"I guess I'll have to be going," I said.

"Why, won't you sit down a few minutes?" Mrs. Berg asked.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Weber.

"We all saw your picture in the paper when you won that scholarship," Mrs. Berg said. "What was it for, psychology?"

"Something like that," I said, sitting down.

"We all thought it was fine."

"Did you hear about Bub?" Mrs. Weber asked. "He's going to be on the next Olympics."

"You mean the Olympic team," I said.

"Anyway he's going to go to Europe. He gets all his expenses paid. He's had his picture in all the papers, even in New York."

"Yes, I've seen him run. He's very good," I said.

"Did you hear that the McLellan boy entered the priesthood?" Mrs. Berg asked. "He's going to be a Jesuit. It will take him sixteen years before he gets out."

"I'm afraid I stopped being religious a long time ago," I said quickly.

"Why, don't you still go to what do they call it? mass any more?" Mrs. Weber demanded. "I always thought you were going to be a priest yourself."

"Oh no, Mrs. Weber, you're altogether wrong about that."

"I always thought you were."

"Oh no."

There was a long silence.

Mrs. Berg asked me if I'd like to go upstairs and see Russell.

"Why, yes. I'd like to very much. If it's all right. You understand what I mean by if it's all right. Just that maybe he's asleep, or you have to straighten up, or something like that. . . . I'd like to see him very much," I said positively, rising.

Nothing more was said, we walked out of the room. The machine shop was left on the hall table. Mrs. Weber de-

sired me to precede her on the stairs, and I sprang forward at once. Before leaving home I had put on a new plaid suit that widened me, as well as my best shoes, a clean shirt, and my favorite tie. I had been eager to display myself to Mrs. Weber. This had been the reason for my good spirits; this was why I had shut my book so readily at the suggestion of the gift, and why I had jumped up and kissed my mother.

Upstairs Mrs. Berg excused herself and went into Russell's room. Mrs. Weber and I were left alone.

I grinned. "Well, here we are — alone again."

"Just wait till you see him," she said. "It's terrible the way he is now. Sometimes I want to take Sarah in one hand and him in the other and walk into the river. You don't know how it is to have a boy like that. Why, he's just an idiot, that's what he is. He really is."

Mrs. Berg opened the door.

At first the room looked nearly as dark as it had been on the winter evenings when Russell and I played with our toy trains together. It did not seem surprising that the tracks should still be there. As my eyes grew used to the shaded light I could tell my own cars from his with no difficulty. In the same way I recognized a turntable, a bridge, a caboose, and certain mailcars as relative innovations. The tracks were still laid out according to a scheme of my own engineering. My memory made me ashamed; it would have been more distinguished, I thought, not to have recalled with so little effort the names of the three cities which the network of tracks connected, nor to have recognized the man living in the signal tower by name.

Russell remained sitting by the tracks.

"Aren't you going to say hello?" Mrs. Berg reproved him.

"Hi, Punk," he said with a grin.

I had forgotten I had ever been called by that name.

"Hi, Russ," I said.

His hand was wet and loathsome. I left mine in his a second longer than usual, so as not to appear disgusted to Mrs. Berg.

What saddened me most was not her efforts to make the reunion seem commonplace, nor Mrs. Weber's compressed silence until Russell picked his nose — when she scolded him angrily — nor Russell's preoccupation with a switch; it was his long trousers and a rumblossom pimple on his nose. These made me think of his lonely adolescence. Up to this point my thoughts and feelings have seemed to me to be clear, but although I have reflected several days—and try not to feign incomprehension where I understand the truth — I am unable to say why I carried away, when I left Russell, a burden of guilt. This guilt, nonetheless — not sadness, not pity — I still feel: I cannot bear today to think of being well while he is sick. I have been compelled to write this apology for my health.

GERALD SYKES

INVITATION

Come in, come into Christian Schroeder's house.
Tip up those burly eyebrows: we'll carouse.
While the warm West pulls on the boot of Night
sitting on stones with tilted hats we'll fight
with naked hands of mind,
Love's daggers crossed.
Your dangerous eyes show me what I have lost.

The Lord but late
shepherding on this rock came in His mantle, bidding me
unlock
for Him I made a fire in my heart
and burned, burned, burned 'ere let that Light depart.

Come in. . . .
wind follows through the gaping door.
Twigs and wet leaves wipe over Christian's floor.
Draughts swelling make the unwelcome puddles bold
my home is here
can you endure the cold ?

Villainous darling
on your heaviness
what rat-mouth King that seal did first impress ?
The world has murdered what you might have been

yet always starlit queen, you are a queen.
Daughter of darkness
In your falling hair the sons of morning hide their wild
despair.

You lean with studied ease on a grey pier
as if it were not pillar of all here.
Ungracious speechless visitor
like the swallow open-mouthed:
flies go in,
but no tunes follow.

O filthy laughter !
Better lie in grave than laugh.
Remember, "what I had I gave."
Is the stream falling, falling, falling ever
dearer
than the green crag it chills ?
Lord !
never.

ERIC SCHROEDER

HENRY ADAMS

A CRITICISM IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

PART II

CHAPTER V

"*The Five of Hearts*" (1880-1884)

THE Five of Hearts" lived in Washington, and they were Clarence King, Hay and his wife, and the Adamses. In 1884 Adams joined Hay in employing H. H. Richardson to build them adjoining houses on La Fayette Square. "Nowhere in the United States was there then, or has there since been, such a *salon* as theirs (the Adamses'). Sooner or later, everybody who possessed real quality crossed the threshold of 1603 H Street. Host and hostess were fastidious, and only the select came to them. Mr. Adams sought nobody out; he regarded himself as solitary, and knew very well that official Washington cared nothing for him, and little enough for the intellectual sphere in which he lived. . . . To his intimates — and these included women of wit and charm and distinction — the hours spent in his study or at his table were the best that Washington could give."[12] Out of this society came the novels, the anonymous *Democracy* in 1880, and *Esther*, in 1884, which was published under the pseudonym of Frances Snow Compton.

In his novels Adams began with a theme. Like many Eng-

[12] Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*. Vol. II, p. 53.

lish writers — Pope, Blake, Wordsworth, Shaw — Adams risked the inclusion of contemporary material which was likely to become musty with time. *Democracy*, like his articles, the "Session" and "Civil Service Reform," exposed the meager substance of the democratic ideal; *Esther* revealed the ineffectualness of modern religion.

The theme of *Democracy* was the first chapter: "For reasons which many persons thought ridiculous, Mrs. Lightfoot Lee decided to pass the winter in Washington. . . . She wanted to see with her own eyes the action of primary forces; to touch with her own hand the massive machinery of society; to measure with her own mind the capacity of the motive power. She was bent upon getting to the heart of the great American mystery of democracy and government."[13]

Esther, as well, immediately considered its problem: "The new Church of St. John's, on Fifth Avenue, was thronged the morning of the last Sunday of October, in the year 1880. Sitting in the gallery, beneath the unfinished frescoes, and looking down the nave, one caught an effect of autumn gardens, a suggestion of chrysanthemums and geraniums, or of October woods, dashed with scarlet oaks and yellow maples. As a display of austerity the show was a failure, but if cheerful content and innocent adornment please the Author of the lilies and roses, there was reason to hope that this first service at St. John's found favor in His sight, even though it showed no victory over the world or the flesh in this part of the United States. The sun came through the figure of St. John in his crimson and green garments of glass, and scattered more color where colors already rivaled the flowers of a prize show; while huge prophets and evangelists in flowing robes looked down from the red walls on a display

[13] *Democracy*, pp. 1 and 10.

of human vanities that would have called out a vehement Lamentation of Jeremiah or Song of Solomon had these poets been present in flesh as they were in figure.

"Solomon was a brilliant but not an accurate observer; he looked at the world from the narrow stand-point of his own temple. Here in New York he could not have truthfully said that all was vanity, for even a more ill-natured satirist than he must have confessed that there was in this new temple today a perceptible interest in religion. One might almost have said that religion seemed to be a matter of concern. The audience wore a look of interest, and even after their first gaze of admiration and whispered criticism at the splendors of their new church, when at length the clergyman entered to begin the service, a ripple of excitement swept across the field of bonnets until there was almost a murmur as of rustling cornfields within the many colored walls of St. John's" . . . The Clergyman, Mr. Hazard, "took possession of his flock with a general advertisement that he owned every sheep in it, white or black, and to show that there could be no doubt on the matter he added a general claim to the right of property in all mankind and the universe. . . . After sweeping all human thought and will into his strongbox, he shut down the lid with a sharp click, and bade his audience kneel. . . . 'And how did it suit you, Esther?'

" 'I am charmed,' replied his daughter, 'only it certainly does come just a little near being an opera-house. Mr. Hazard looks horribly like Meyerbeer's Prophet.' "[14]

The plots follow out the settings. In *Democracy*, Mrs. Lee comes near being a sacrifice to the corruption of representative government in the form of Senator Ratcliffe; in *Esther*, Miss Dudley is almost an Iphigenia offered to the

[14] *Esther*, pp. 1-13.

religious knife of Reverend Hazard. The action centers about the women.

"Adams owed more to the American woman than to all the American men he ever heard of." . . . Yet sometimes, at dinner, he "might wait till talk flagged, and then, as mildly as possible, ask one's liveliest neighbor whether she could explain why the American woman was a failure. . . . The cleverer the woman, the less she denied the failure. She was bitter at heart about it. She had failed even to hold the family together, and her children ran away like chickens with their first feathers; the family was extinct like chivalry. The American woman at her best — like most other women — exerted great charm on the man, but not the charm of a primitive type. She appeared as the result of a long series of discords, and her chief interest lay in what she had discarded."[15]

"In any previous age, sex was strength. Neither art nor beauty was needed. Every one, even among Puritans, knew that neither Diana of the Ephesians nor any of the oriental goddesses was worshipped for her beauty. She was goddess because of her force; she was the animated dynamo; she was reproduction — the greatest and most mysterious of all energies; all she needed was to be fecund."[16]

Mrs. Lightfoot Lee and Esther Dudley were American women and failures. To Adams they were almost as great failures as himself. The worth while women in America Adams suggested in the young, buoyant types of Sybil Ross in *Democracy* and Catherine Brooke in *Esther*. They had, at least, something of Laura, St. Cecilia, something of the luxuriousness of "L'Aube, Mois du Juin." Madeline Lee, on the other hand, "cared little where her pursuit might

[15] *The Education*, pp. 442-445.

[16] *The Education*, p. 384.

lead her, for she put no extravagant value upon life, having already, as she said, exhausted at least two lives, and being fairly hardened to insensibility in the process. 'To lose a husband and a baby,' said she, 'and keep one's courage and reason, one must become very hard and very soft. I am now pure steel. You may beat my heart with a trip-hammer and it will beat the trip-hammer back again.' "[17]

And Esther for an American Virgin is quite hopeless. While she combs her hair, she looks out through a window upon Niagara: Force and an understanding of immortality strike her with great suddenness — "immortality is a sort of great reservoir of truth, and what is true in us just pours into it like raindrops."[18] Adams himself could not have expressed it any better in the scientific deviousness of his *Education.* His women characters are brilliant, profound, but they all escape marriage.

The novels were books of disillusion. Disillusion often gives free reign to most sensitive expression:

"Esther was now twenty-five years old, and for fifteen years had been absolute mistress of her father's house."[19]

"So she went to her bed, in the cold, gray dawn of a winter's day, with the tears still running down her face. When she awoke again the day was already waning, a dripping wasting thaw, where smoking and soot-defiled snow added sadness to the sad sky."[20]

After her father's death, Esther, to forget, goes to the children's hospital; the children request stories: "She took her old seat and looked through the yellow eyes of the firedogs for inspiration."[21]

[17] *Democracy*, p. 11.
[18] *Esther*, p. 273.
[19] *Esther*, p. 17.
[20] *Esther*, Chap. VI.
[21] *Esther*, p. 160.

"She felt quite sure, by a sudden flash of feminine inspiration, that the curious look of patient endurance on his face was the work of a single night when he had held his brother in his arms, and knew that the blood was draining drop by drop from his side, in the dense, tangled woods, beyond the reach of help, hour after hour, till the voice failed and the limbs grew stiff and cold. When he had finished his story, she was afraid to speak."[22]

"In February the weather became warmer and summer-like. In Virginia there comes often at this season a deceptive gleam of summer, slipping in between heavy storm-clouds of sleet and snow; days and sometimes weeks when the earliest plants begin to show their hardy flowers, and when the bare branches of the forest trees alone protest against the conduct of the seasons."[23]

On the whole, however, the novels meant to be charmingly gay. Adams was no Dostoyevsky, seeking character under guise on guise of psychological attitude. Neither did he, like Henry James, make an aesthetic of manners. His people were by all means the choicest, but he did not trouble to explain why each one of them spoke in his own way. Adams just had them speak. Thus, Count Popoff: " 'Mees Ross,' said Count Popoff, leading in a handsome young foreigner, 'I have your permission to present to you my friend, Count Orsini, Secretary of the Italian Legation. Are you at home this afternoon? Count Orsini sings also.' "

Adams suggested character in a name: Mr. Hartbeest Schneidekoupon, Senator Nathan Gore from Massachusetts, Senator Silas P. Ratcliffe from Illinois, Miss Virginia Dare, Lord Skye, George Hazard. *Democracy*, in its description

[22] *Democracy*, p. 251.

[23] *Democracy*, p. 113.

of the fête given by the society of Washington to the Grand-Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Baden-Hombourg, rivals the lightning grace of a Max Beerbohm.

The "Five of Hearts" must have gloried in Adams' wit — especially in the success he attained in Sybil's letter to Carrington: "I read Mr. Browning's 'Last Ride Together,' as you told me; I think it's beautiful and perfectly easy, all but a little. I never could understand a word of him before — so I never tried. Who do you think is engaged? Victoria Dare, to a coronet and peatbog, with Lord Dunbeg attached. Victoria says she is happier than she ever was before in any of her other engagements, and she is sure this is the real one. She says she has thirty thousand a year derived from the poor of America, which may just as well go to relieve the poor of Ireland. You know her father was a claim agent, or some such thing, and is said to have made his money by cheating his clients out of their claims. She is perfectly wild to be a countess, and means to make Castle Dunbeg lovely by-and-by and entertain us all there. Madeleine says she is just the kind to be a great success in London. Madeleine is very well, and sends her regards. I believe she is going to add a postscript. I have promised to let her read this, but I don't think a chaperoned letter is much fun to write or receive. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Sincerely yours,
Sybil Ross."[24]

Henry Adams was happy then. The nieces remember him and their aunt and the summer house in the Beverly woods. "Often in the afternoons, the nieces would watch — almost enviously — the two figures on horseback vanishing into the

[24] *Democracy*, pp. 373-374.

flickering sunlight of the woods. An impression of oneness of life and mind, of perfect companionship, left an ideal never to be effaced."[25]

Chapter VI

The Aged Man of Learning and a Judgment (1880-1891)

MABEL LA FARGE pursues the story of the happiest days: "At that time he was writing his *History*; hours of concentration were passed in his den and sheets on sheets of beautifully written pages lay beside him. One could not forget that handwriting. Each letter seemed to be carved rather than written, and the effect of the whole page was that of an interlacing Byzantine design, but perfectly clear to read. The nieces remember him as he sat at his desk, in cool white summer clothes — his fine head and thoughtful forehead dominated a small frame; his movements were deliberate — only the scratch of his pen would break the silence of the room, until the delicious moment came when he would stop, and turn to them with an irresistibly droll remark."

Adams, also, reconsidered the *History* in his *Education*: "Adams had given ten or a dozen years to Jefferson and Madison, with expenses which, in any mercantile business, could hardly have been reckoned at less than a hundred thousand dollars, on a salary of five thousand a year; and when he asked what return he got from this expenditure, rather more extravagant in proportion to his means than a racing-stable, he could see none whatever."[26]

The History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison, in nine volumes of over

[25] *Letters to a Niece*, p. 8.

[26] P. 327.

four thousand pages, easily placed Henry Adams among such American historians of rank as Prescott and Parkman. For impartial judgment, for literary power that can turn documentary research to useful reflection and absorbing story, authorities, like Worthington Chauncey Ford, Carl Becker, Henry Osborn Taylor, think it unrivaled. John Hay informally averred that the volumes on the first administration of Madison (V and VI) "took the cake. The style is perfect, if perfect is a proper word applied to anything so vivid, so flexible and so powerful. I never expected to read anything which would give me so much pleasure." Hay never expected Adams to get the Loubat Prize, as well, and wondered "that Columbia College could have done so evidently sensible a thing."

The general reader will perhaps give "the cake" to the introduction — (Volume I — Chapters 1-6) which consists of the chapters on Physical and Economical Conditions, Popular Characteristics, Intellect of New England, Intellect of the Middle States, Intellect of the Southern States, and American Ideals. The preliminary is at once broadly descriptive and specific, and thruout, once a picture is presented it stays in mind: "Nature was rather man's master than his servant, and the five million Americans struggling with the untamed continent seemed hardly more competent to their task than the beavers and buffalo which had for countless generations made bridges and roads of their own."[27] . . . "A traveller on the levee at Natchez, in 1808, overheard a quarrel in a flatboat near by: 'I am a man; I am a horse; I am a team,' cried one voice; 'I can whip any man in all Kentucky, by God!' 'I am an alligator,' cried the other, 'half man, half horse; can whip

[27] Vol. I, p. 5.

any man on the Mississippi, by God!' 'I am a man,' shouted the first; 'I have the best horse, best dog, best gun, and handsomest wife in all Kentucky, by God!' 'I am a Mississippi snapping-turtle,' joined the second, 'I have bear's claws, alligator's teeth, and the devil's tail; can whip *any* man, by God!' "[28] . . .

"Moore was but an echo of fashionable England in his day. He seldom affected moral sublimity; and had he in his wanderings met a race of embodied angels, he would have sung of them or to them in the slightly erotic notes which were so well received in the society he loved to frequent and flatter."[29]

"Most picturesque of all figures in modern history, Napoleon Bonaparte, like Milton's Satan on his throne of state, although surrounded by a group of figures little less striking than himself, sat unapproachable on his bad eminence; or, when he moved, the dusky air felt an unusual weight. His conduct was often mysterious, and sometimes so arbitrary as to seem insane; but later years have thrown on it a lurid illumination."[30]

Passage after passage must be quoted to give an adequate idea of the sentence rhythm, which always meets the subject with a master's grace. Poetry, in the simple direct phrasing, is concentrate: "The poor came, and from them were seldom heard complaints of deception or delusion"[31] . . . "A week afterward Jefferson quitted Washington forever. On horseback, over roads impassable to wheels, through snow and storm, he hurried back to Monticello to recover in the quiet of home the peace of mind he had lost in disappointments of

[28] Vol. I, p. 54.
[29] Vol. I, p. 167.
[30] Vol. I, p. 334.
[31] Vol. I, p. 194.

statesmanship. He arrived at Monticello March 15 and never passed beyond the bounds of a few adjacent counties."[32]

Humor is abundant, especially in portraiture. Jefferson, who was sensitive, affectionate, heroic, in his own eyes, and more refined than many women in the delicacy of his private relations, again, sits on one hip. John Marshall's calm is Rhadamanthine. Napoleon, in his bath, overrules his brothers on the Louisiana treaty. When the British fleet steamed up the Potomac, "the House of Representatives ordered a fast and went into secret session to consider modes of defence." As Adams said of Irving's *History of New York*: it is hard to burlesque without vulgarizing, and to satirize without malignity. Adams succeeded in doing both.

The direction of the entire work is not only American; it is international. It is not merely a progression of great narratives that embraces the Napoleonic Wars, the growth of America from the backwoods to the beginning of industrialism, but it is specific in many branches of knowledge — law, finance, sociology, American literature in the early eighteen hundreds. Yet, after all this mass of detail, the work ends on a number of questions: "The traits of American character were fixed; the rate of physical and economic growth was established; and history, certain that at a given distance of time the Union would contain so many millions of people, with wealth valued at so many millions of dollars, became thenceforward chiefly concerned to know what kind of people these millions were to be. They were intelligent, but what paths would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble problems would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise

[32] Vol. IV, p. 472.

over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their relaxations bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions to be purged? What interests were to vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object besides physical content must a democratic continent aspire to attain?"[33]

Adams wrote the *History* during the happy years, and perhaps never thought it was necessary to answer these questions. The *History* is a presentation of facts. No philosophy controls these facts; no science that indicates even a "decline and fall." The last was perhaps not in the nature of Adams' subject.

A French sceptic has told the story of the king who desired to know the history of mankind. Scholars brought him thousands of volumes. The king, overwhelmed, asked for a compendium. Years passed, and perhaps the scholars brought him nine, and finally one, when he was ready to turn his face to the wall and resign his breath. "I die," said the king, "without knowing the history of mankind." "Not so, sire," answered the aged man of learning, who had finally arrived: "I can compress it for you into three words. They were born, suffered and died."

"Art," says Delacroix, "is exaggeration in the right place." In his *History*, Adams did not exaggerate. But by the time he came to publish it, the happy years were gone. The *History* seemed a worthless labor.

Always, to Adams, education, brought face to face with friendship, as when he met Clarence King, was no longer possible. And before Nature — "the human mind felt itself stripped naked, vibrating in a void of shapeless energies, with resistless mass, colliding, crushing, wasting, and destroying

[33] Vol. IX, p. 369.

what these same energies had created and labored from eternity to perfect." . . . "Flung suddenly in his face, with the harsh brutality of chance, the terror of the blow stayed by him thenceforth for life, until repetition made it more than the will could struggle with; more than he could call on himself to bear."[34]

Chapter VII

Dec. 6, 1885

WHEN John Hay heard that his friend's wife had died, he wrote to him: "You and your wife were more to me than any other two. I came to Washington because you were there. And now this goodly fellowship is broken up forever. I cannot force on a man like you the commonplaces of condolence . . . You have a great sorrow, but no man should bear sorrow better than you."[35]

Adams lived it all through, but ever so silently. He might imply that his life had been a broken arch, but he felt repose and self-restraint as nothing else. Leaving art to make the best of death in a monument at Rock Creek, Adams went on submissive. To the heart, at least, infinite peace meant something.

Adams' world lay all before him. His best works were yet to be written. Still, to the sensitive with whom great contacts were few, and these a very quiet matter, the greatest was never to be recorded.

[34] *The Education*, chapter XIX.

[35] *Life and Letters of John Hay*. Vol. II, p. 59.

Louis Zukofsky

To Be Continued

FAMILIAR HEROINE

Of our knowing a heroine
Given to seeing all houses as yellow
All shade as cold ocean possessing.
She walks stampingly strange lanes where thistles fall often,
And she stands a while on dark steps by long tracks.
She likes insects to whom she gives names, a name for each one she knows.
She sees cubes in soft earth, fans in air, steps in the high air beyond houses.
She prays noisily certain powers she is familiar with, fond of colorful dressing, of sweeping clothes and snug hair.
She loves coils, corrugations, springs, wires together, woven each into each.
She thinks a certain moon ought to be for Greece, another for Guiana, the first Guiana.
She sees novels as straight from a nervous devil who knows what two syllables can do going with three.
She sees cars as a steel-like, speedy vegetation, made to transport air and vivify reposeful atmosphere.
What she thinks of gales is horrible.
Hurricanes she's very fond of and understands them more each day.
White she sees as the color of things underground, as the color of the bottoms of frigates, liners, various ships; also as the means of talking used by certain bold petals.

Her sentiments are highly flexible; yesterday they changed about the number 80.

Wood she sees as Juno's favorite, Mexico's darling.

Mahogany is to her worthy of praise for the sounds it can make; also for the fine way it goes with air.

Night she sees as the cover of meadows, the stiller of trees, the adorner of spheres, and the general painting of weighty, wide substances, given to having shouting in them.

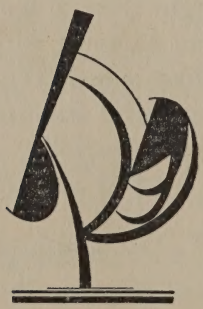
Quiet she looks upon as something charming, something made by mischievous, but correct gods to be of much assistance to certain dreams.

This heroine is a dweller among spaces, between parallels, and the emptinesses neighboring jagged high marble growings out of the ground.

Such is a heroine of our knowing.

Us she sees as knowing her well and friendly.

ELI SIEGEL



THE DEFINITION OF HUMANISM

"Are you then an aesthete?"

"Ah there's one of the formulas! That's walking in one's hat! I've *no* profession. . . . These things are a part of the complicated ingenious machinery. . . . Merely to be is such a *métier*. . . . Why should one call one's self anything? One only deprives other people of their dearest occupation. Let me add that you don't *begin* to have an insight into the art of life till it ceases to be of the smallest consequence to you what you may be called."

The conversation with Gabriel Nash, of which the above question and answer form a part, has come back to me more than once out of Henry James's *Tragic Muse* as I have followed the discussion of humanism, during the last eighteen months or more, in periodicals and books. Several essays which have appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, written by Mr. Philip S. Richards and by Mr. F. McEachran, have been excellent; one can have only praise for them, and the feeling that Mr. McEachran's "Humanism and Tragedy," in particular, lends worth to the discussion which called it forth. Mr. Bandler's essay on "The Individualism of Irving Babbitt," published in this periodical last autumn, is likewise valuable for critical characterization of a high order. Nevertheless, I have been reminded of Nash's light words because they adumbrate a serious problem. Doubtless we should all decry formulas;— notoriously the whole race longs for

them, will have them. "Man lives not by bread alone, but chiefly by catchwords," said the irascible wise man of Chelsea. But the humanist, if any one, the man who has a genuine "insight into the art of life," must be peculiarly distrustful of catchwords — of formulas cheap, alas, from their very nature. The humanist, if any one in our time, will refuse to advertise himself, and will care not by what name the multitude may designate him.

Yet an aroused public interest brings general discussion; argument is born thereof; questions are insistently asked; "direct" (absolute) answers are demanded — Yes or No. Controversy *creates* formulas — cannot live without them, and thrives to no other end. The inevitable spokesman appears, anxious to oblige. A "movement" is in being. The worst of these "movements," thought W. P. Ker, is that they put "ideas into people's heads who would not otherwise have been troublesome." And Ker quoted a verse from Tennyson's *Holy Grail* to enforce his remark:

"Lo, one hath seen, and all the blind will see!"

The blind are duly participating in the present discussion of humanism, obscuring the real issue, and inclining one simply to turn away from the paper warfare. But that too is impossible; silence itself is misunderstood; and the fate of Gabriel Nash is only one of many warnings that this is not the worst penalty attending silence. Few episodes in fiction are really so amusing and, at the same time, so profoundly conceived as that wherein poor excellent Nash fades away from earthly haunts; — quietly fades away just because he not only refuses the fields of action open to men, but even refuses to submit his evaluations to the ordeal of exact expression and vulgar confrontation. The price of his singular detachment is his gradual, and finally complete, loss of identity. His is a

very special case, to be sure — but special only in its "accidents."

For the problem Nash typifies is as old as man and is central in his existence. However it may be "above," here and now one must reap one's good precariously in the choice of lesser evils. To withdraw from the world is what Gabriel found it, what Dr. Johnson so often and forcibly pictured it to be; — it is to render disaster certain. One's good is lost by aiming at it too closely, without regard to earthly limitations. To exist as a man is to exist among men; to believe is to act positively, to bear witness positively, not ostentatiously, humbly it may be, but without sacrificing more to vulgar demands than the social basis of life necessitates. Circumstances at length in this year 1930, we are told, give humanism a popular appeal. "We must make the most of this opportunity." By all means. "We must have a programme, catchwords, be radically modern, meet the public on its own ground, insinuate a kinship with science, generously absorb religion, make genial concessions." By no means. As well say outright, "Cease to be a humanist in order to sell humanism." Speech is, truly enough, a manner as well as a means of accommodation, and is misused if it does not serve the cause of common understanding. But if the honest effort to see clearly and to speak plainly is not enough — so much the worse for popular success. How much evidence, after all, opposes Thoreau's grim conclusion: "God does not sympathize with the popular movements"?

I

The point, like others, may be laboured too much. But I cannot concede, with Professor Foerster, that Mr. T. S. Eliot wrote an "earnest essay" on "The Humanism of Irving Bab-

bitt," nor that he wrote earnestly his "Second Thoughts about Humanism."[1] Professor Foerster's gratitude for these brightly written meditations leaves me, like the poet, mourning. Mr. Eliot professes to be a friendly critic, reluctantly impelled to expose the weaknesses of Professor Babbitt's humanism just because he values "pure" humanism and wishes to save it from discredit. Professor Foerster takes Mr. Eliot at his word and finds his questions "helpful because they are really searching." If this be forbearance, it is as remarkable in its way as Mr. Eliot's pretensions. If it be policy on each side, it may be "beautiful," but it is not the "best policy" as classically defined.

For it is, I conceive, easily demonstrable that Mr. Eliot is no critic at all of the humanism of Messrs. Babbitt and P. E. More. Were he aware of the real character of his essays, he might justly and accurately explain his performance, in a moment of candour, by altering slightly a famous letter of Lord Chesterfield: "As a convenient means of developing my own notions," he would say, "I was to treat of American humanism, which is expounded at length in books, most of which I have never mastered. However, it was absolutely necessary to make my readers think that I knew something of the matter, and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them as the new American humanism, and they would scarcely have noticed the difference; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them.

[1] I refer to "Humanism and Religion," an article by Professor Norman Foerster published in *The Forum*, September, 1929, and in *The Criterion*, October, 1929. Mr. Eliot's first essay mentioned above is to be found in his book *For Lancelot Andrewes*, 1928; and his second in *The New Adelphi*, June, 1929, and in *The Hound & Horn*, July, 1929.

I gave them, therefore, only an historical view of humanism from Socrates to Erasmus, amusing them now and then with little ingenuities of transposition and allusion; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the form of my sentences, to the establishment of an easy relation with my readers. This succeeded, and ever will succeed: they thought I informed, because I pleased them; and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them, when, God knows, I had not even attempted it."

I do not, of course, mean to imply that Mr. Eliot deliberately clouded the issue; I mean only to say that, with some allowance for Chesterfield's irony, this adaptation fairly indicates his actual achievement. He wrote honestly, I am sure, but ignorantly, hastily, flippantly, as a master of the dubious art of plausible reviewing. His mastery of this art has ever been a dangerous accomplishment; yet through nearly all of his criticism there shines a light — the light of a very pure, though not exactly profound, intelligence — and the first at least of his essays on humanism is no complete exception to what many have come to think of, happily and gratefully, as the rule with Mr. Eliot. It contains acute observations. But that acumen which has often led him swiftly and surely to the centre of his subjects, and has made him deservedly one of the most respected and distinguished critics of our day, has in this instance served him ill. He has sharply outlined certain peripheral truths, themselves concerning not humanism so much as Professor Babbitt, under the impression that he was thus illuminating the heart of his subject. And superficiality proved a fatal temptation, perhaps, just because he was moved by a serious personal interest.

As everyone now knows, Mr. Eliot has been convinced of the continuing validity of historic Christianity, and has be-

come an Anglo-Catholic. There remain troublesome, unanswered questions as to what this may mean; but evidently, in the essays now in question, it at least means that he rests himself, for his understanding of life, upon external absolute authority. Those who guard and transmit Christian revelation and dogma, however, he distrusts, holding that their office makes them "narrow, bigoted, and fanatical." These evil manifestations of human nature, nevertheless, "the world cannot get on without," though it also cannot get on without their counter-agent, "general culture," which "makes for breadth, tolerance, equilibrium, and sanity." "Pure" humanism, he asserts, *is* simply "general culture"; — hence his concern for it. But "pure" humanism exerts its moderating, civilizing power only in dependence on religion; when opposed to "the religious faith of the place and time" humanism is "purely destructive."

How this would work out in detail is a mystery, and no surprise should be felt at Mr. Eliot's warning that "a considerable time" must elapse before his promised solution will be ready. Meanwhile it is disquieting that he should write as if his troubles were already over. It is at least a pity that one who appears not to take serious questions seriously, should himself be taken seriously by others. The "young intellectuals" who are said to follow his lead will perhaps discover in time that Mr. Eliot has exaggerated, not to say distorted, the significance of his "conversion."

However that may be, from a foundation not yet built, if I may so put it, Mr. Eliot has addressed words of admonishment to American humanists because, valuing "pure" humanism for the reason above mentioned, he has discovered that Professor Babbitt's kind is "very different" from that of the exponents of "general culture." In this difference he dis-

cerns weakness productive of disaster — nothing less than "the ultimate discredit of all humanism." He does so because certain forcible remarks of Professor Babbitt have led him to believe that American humanism offers itself as an alternative to religion — and "for us, religion is of course Christianity." Professor Foerster, in the brief exposition of humanism included in his *American Criticism*,[2] has confirmed Mr. Eliot in his belief.

It is clear, then, that Mr. Eliot wrote as a friend of "pure" humanism, but as an enemy of American humanism in which he scented a challenge to his religion. Tactically it was an advantage to picture the rival as weak, to poke fun at Professor Babbitt, to make Professor Foerster look silly — and all this was done; while in fact Mr. Eliot admitted that the rival's contentions were "dangerous," were "seductive to the best minds." But the inconsistency was only apparent, for both the weakness and the seduction were of Mr. Eliot's invention, and came to the same thing in his method of attack. They issued, indeed, from the accusation that Professor Babbitt's humanism was only a new humanitarianism — disguised, chastened, above all educated — but humanitarianism still. For Mr. Eliot's belated discovery that Professor Babbitt was something different from an apostle of "general culture" led him — not to further study and a real effort to elucidate the difference — but to T. E. Hulme.

[2] I cannot think the publication of this essay fortunate. There was a real need for something of the sort, but no compulsion to meet it hastily. And Mr. Foerster — unintentionally, of course — gives the impression that he speaks authoritatively for humanism rather than for himself, which has proved a source of trouble. It is a misfortune, too, that this brief, least satisfactory portion of the book has distracted attention from the four solid studies preceding it. In these studies Mr. Foerster's thorough scholarship, sound judgement, and brilliancy of presentation are finely exhibited.

II

Of Hulme Mr. Jacob Epstein portentously says: "Like Plato and Socrates, he drew the intellectual youth of his time around him." While he lived — he was killed in action in September, 1917, early in his thirty-fifth year — he cast his spell chiefly through conversation. But he had vast literary designs, and kept notebooks. And his *Speculations* (1924)— fragments mostly, pieced together from memoranda — continue to influence intellectual youth. "I agree with what Hulme says," Mr. Eliot admits.

Not without company, Hulme believed that the early years of the present century had witnessed the last agonies of the Romantic Movement, and had brought us to a decisive turning-point in history. He looked for a renewal of full-blown religion, and hoped, in fact, to promote it. To this end he outlined an argument, partially dependent on his own view of the course of thought from ancient times to ours. This argument — like the man, as one supposes — is striking. It contains not a few acute suggestions, thrown off by an active, nervously direct mind. But, too, it involves its author in the gravest difficulties. At the outset, for example, he finds it convenient to insist that reality is divided into three *absolutely* discontinuous parts: the inorganic world, the organic, and the world of ethical and religious values. Yet he cannot take one step towards his conclusion without surreptitiously assuming that these discontinuities are after all *not* absolute. One such inconsequence inevitably begets others, and it is so with Hulme.

He concluded, uncritically, that realization of the absolute futility of existence "has formed the basis of all the great religions" — a realization best symbolized by the *wheel*. "In

November 1829, a tragic date for those who see with regret the establishment of a lasting and devastating stupidity, Goethe — in answer to Eckermann's remark that human thought and action seemed to repeat itself, going round in a circle — said: '*No, it is not a circle, it is a spiral*' "; — and so he enthroned the idea of Progress. Yet Hulme did "not in the least wish to imply any mechanical view of history as an inevitable alteration" of futilities, nor did he "in the least imagine" that the new religious era of the immediate future will be "merely . . . a new mediaevalism." In fact the history of ancient art proves the reality of Progress; and in fact the "ideology" of the last four centuries "has developed an honesty in science, and a certain conception of freedom of thought and action which will remain" — so that here also the movement of humanity according to Hulme has been, not circular, but spiral. The result is that his religion is enigmatical to us, because it remained an unsolved problem to him.

Of course, it is easy to say that the contradictions, and even puerilities, of the *Speculations* are unimportant because we have only the man's rough disjointed notes. But the testimony both of the book and of its editor impels one to doubt if Hulme could ever have resolved his difficulties. "He was not, by design," says Mr. Herbert Read, "a systematic thinker. He was, in one sense at least, a poet: he preferred to see things in the emotional light of a metaphor rather than to reach reality through scientific analysis." This is very well, for an editor's euphemism. In fact, Hulme's brilliancy and the correctness of his general, vague sense of the human situation are equally evident. But his flashes of insight were isolated, almost accidental, and not subject to any rigorous criticism. If he was fruitfully disillusioned, he was also rebellious, undisciplined, and an incurable dilettante.

In nothing is this more evident than in his high-handed treatment of history, which by main force he moulded to suit his purpose. For he asserted "that all thought since the Renaissance, in spite of its apparent variety, in reality forms one coherent whole. It all rests on the same presuppositions which were denied by the previous period. It all rests on the same conception of the nature of man, and all exhibits the same complete inability to realize the meaning of the dogma of Original Sin." As a consequence, "you get a refusal to believe any longer in the radical imperfection of either Man or Nature. This develops logically into the belief that life is the source and measure of all values, and that man is fundamentally good. . . . This leads to a complete change in all values. The problem of evil disappears, the conception of sin loses all meaning. Man may be that bastard thing, 'a harmonious character.' Under ideal conditions, everything of value will spring spontaneously from 'free personalities.' If nothing good seems to appear spontaneously now, that is because of external restrictions and obstacles. Our political ideal should be the removal of everything that checks the 'spontaneous growth of personality.' Progress is thus possible, and order is a merely negative conception."

This Hulme called Humanism: — "all thought since the Renaissance," forming "one coherent whole." Against it he opposed at every point the religious attitude, characterized by the living conviction that ethical values are "absolute and objective," and by the "conception of Perfection." "In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect; . . . he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline — ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating."

As far as it goes, this passage concerning the religious atti-

tude is profoundly true; and the preceding passages are equally true of one stream of naturalistic thought since the Renaissance. Obviously by Humanism Hulme meant what other men are agreed in calling Humanitarianism. And obviously this explains and disposes of Mr. T. S. Eliot's essays. Mr. Eliot's odd admonition to Professor Babbitt was based upon the inference that if Professor Babbitt did not stand simply for "general culture," was an individualist, and could not accept Christian dogma as sanctioned by revelation — why, then, he must be, despite appearances, an exponent of Hulme's "Humanism," which is to say, Humanitarianism. Thereupon Mr. Allen Tate developed the argument, largely from hints furnished by Mr. Eliot, but with extraordinary self-assurance, in an obscure and badly confused article, "The Fallacy of Humanism." Mr. Eliot liked this so well that he not only printed it in *The Criterion*,[3] but used it extensively in the

[3] It was also printed, after material revision, in *The Hound & Horn*, January, 1930. I have dealt with this article (as printed in *The Criterion*) separately, in an essay entitled "Humanism and Impudence" (*The Bookman*, January, 1930). Mr. Tate's answer and my "Final Note" appended thereto were published in *The Bookman*, March, 1930. Since the completion of the present essay, two attacks on humanism have been published which are in part (though only in part) related to those of Messrs. Eliot and Tate: "Self-Critical America," by Mrs. Mary M. Colum (*Scribner's Magazine*, February, 1930), and "Humanism and Scholarship," by Professor W. S. Knickerbocker (*Sewanee Review*, January, 1930). As an attack on humanism, neither essay is worth serious attention, though both contain certain isolated observations which are sound. Professor Knickerbocker's article is, on the whole, rambling, muddle-headed, and ill-informed. Mrs. Colum, unlike Professor Knickerbocker, is a capable writer, though she is a fanciful thinker. She complains of Professor Babbitt's failure to recognize the importance of "the inner surrender," which is the source of literature. One knows, of course, what that means.

Other attacks occasioned by the publication of *Humanism and America* (edited by Professor Foerster), cannot be noticed here. They form, on the whole, a convincing illustration of the poverty of current naturalistic criticism; and are remarkable for nothing so much as for ignorance — and its usual accompaniment cocksureness — for ill-temper, and for a stupid facility in missing the point. Mr. Edmund Wilson has attained an unenviable eminence in the composition of self-defeating abuse.

writing of his "Second Thoughts." And Mr. Eliot cannot be called a critic of the new American humanism because clearly he has not even tried to understand it, to meet it. He has tried simply by the readiest means at his disposal to cast discredit upon men who seemed, from a casual inspection, to be putting forward a dangerous rival, "seductive to the best minds," of his own newly found religion. He has written as an anxious propagandist; and thus, too, is explained the note of self-justification on which his "Second Thoughts" end.

Mr. Eliot was led by Hulme—and was led astray. Doubtless some quarrels over words may be as unimportant as the vulgar think them. But, even where no more is involved, the consequence of using words wrongly is to confuse discourse, and finally to make communication impossible. And generally much more is involved. Only "the profane" "have derided the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians." That tempest over a syllable was, of course, the agonized conflict of the early church concerning Arianism. And Carlyle, who had once stood with "the profane" in this, later saw and spoke the truth — that "if the Arians had won, Christianity would have dwindled away to a legend." The confusion, then, between humanism and humanitarianism should not hastily be dismissed as of no importance. The two words must, in fact, be sharply distinguished from each other if just such grave distortions as Hulme was guilty of are ever to be avoided.[4]

[4] In the opening essay in his first book (*Literature and the American College*, 1908) Professor Babbitt insisted upon this: "A person who has sympathy for mankind in the lump, faith in its future progress, and desire to serve the great cause of this progress, should be called not a humanist, but a humanitarian, and his creed may be designated as humanitarianism. From the present tendency to regard humanism as an abbreviated and convenient form for humanitarianism there must arise every manner of confusion. The humanitarian lays stress al-

Hulme, as I have said, accurately described one stream of naturalistic thought. This was the modern thought in which he was interested, because he deeply — and, as I think, correctly — felt it to be false and deserving of the severest condemnation. Yet for the sake of his argument he also wanted to draw out a simple, impressive, and *absolute* contrast between "modernism" and earlier Christianity. Hence, disregarding the complex and troublesome facts, he roundly asserted that "all thought since the Renaissance" formed "one coherent whole" and was humanitarian in character. He did not venture, however, so far to violate probability as to use this word which means what he meant, but instead fell back upon "humanism" as a term which alone might plausibly bear the burden of his generalization.

Just here lay the distortion: in the pretence that Renaissance humanism, underneath its variety, led really in one sole direction, towards one sole end. It was not so. If it did lead through Rabelais and Bacon and Descartes directly to the development of modern humanitarianism in the eighteenth century, it equally led other men in quite other directions, "to fashion," for example, "a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." Ker devoted the lecture from which I have already quoted to the purpose of showing "in a few examples how hard or even impossible it is to define the

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most solely upon breadth of knowledge and sympathy. . . . The humanist . . . is interested in the perfecting of the individual rather than in schemes for the elevation of mankind as a whole; and although he allows largely for sympathy, he insists that it be disciplined and tempered by judgment." Essentially the same distinction had been drawn, more firmly and profoundly, four years earlier by Mr. P. E. More in the concluding study in his *Shelburne Essays*, First Series. Both writers ended, it may be noted, with the quotation of Emerson's "quaint metaphor," or "curious image," as Professor Babbitt calls it: "A man must ride alternately on the horses of his private and his public nature, as the equestrians in the circus throw themselves nimbly from horse to horse," etc.

humanists' ideal so as to include all its manifestations." And he ended by insisting, "There never is any conclusion, when people meet and debate about the humanities." To Ker, moreover, Dante was among the foremost in the great company of the humanists, and spoke "for himself in the person of Ulysses":

> "Call to mind from whence ye sprang:
> Ye were not formed to live the life of brutes,
> But virtue to pursue, and knowledge high."

The truth is, indeed, that of Renaissance humanism must be said what has wittily been said of woman: that no generalization concerning her can be without evidence. Its variety was real and fundamental, because it was not in the first instance a movement of thought at all. It was the rediscovery of an instrument of life which contained potent and diversified stimulants to thought and feeling. A distinguished scholar of our day is said to pride himself upon having written a large work on the Renaissance without once mentioning it. This is more than a little childish; a new wrong does not right an old one; but the scholar in question was eminently right in so far as he merely intended to emphasize his conclusion that the Renaissance introduced no new aims, gave no new direction to life. The discoverer of the automobile did not invent transportation—not even aimless transportation. Renaissance humanism gave assurance, direction, substance, or discipline to various tendencies—tendencies which have their periods of rise and of fall, but which are perennially existent.

This is not to say, however, that criticism cannot with certainty distinguish a conviction animating some humanists of the Renaissance which extends backward in the western world ultimately to Socrates, and which has never ceased to find adherents and expression — not alone literary, but institu-

tional as well — down to our time. It can, therefore, fairly claim centrality, even in the complex manifestations of the Renaissance; — and this, the abiding soul of humanism, is, in part, very well expressed in the words which Hulme used to characterize the religious attitude. For it is the conviction that ethical values derive from and connect us with a world of perfect immaterial reality, and that in the light of these absolute values man himself must be judged to be essentially limited and imperfect, able to accomplish anything of value only by discipline, so that order is not merely negative, but creative and liberating.

This is excellently humanistic, as far as it goes. Yet if criticism can trace this conviction through the generations with certainty, it cannot do so with ease, nor can it go very much further in distinguishing a genuine historical continuity linking together the various concrete manifestations of humanism in western civilization. The reason is that the true humanist has ever been a practical man of the world; avoiding those tempting chimeras metaphysical speculation and pseudo-science; suspicious of rigid abstract formulations; preferring to define his position tentatively, by the methods of critical scrutiny, in close and fruitful relation to actual but ever-changing circumstances; avoiding the self-defeating violence of revolution; preferring to work with and through existing institutions; sacrificing sudden impressiveness to steady, quiet persistence; not expectant of victory; and content even with apparent defeat in untoward times if apparent defeat is the reward of moderation, sane judgment, disciplined taste, and a comely serenity. And hence it is that humanism, if it is ever to be understood, must be studied, not abstractly, but concretely. The attempt by abstraction and generalization to formulate a so-called "pure" humanism is a mere vanity when

it is not a mischievous delusion. A defecated humanism, equally whether it be Professor Foerster's or Mr. T. S. Eliot's, is an insubstantial shadow, because it is a humanism divorced from the concrete circumstances of time and place which, in varying ways from age to age, not only condition its expression, but give it force, importance, and weight.

III

The effort, then, to understand humanism as it exists for us today can only be fruitful in so far as we realize that this is the humanism expounded by Professor Babbitt and Mr. P. E. More. Mr. Eliot's discovery in 1928 that this humanism differs in quality from earlier humanisms was anticipated by Professor Babbitt himself in 1908.[5] It is a fact, an important fact, and augurs well; for otherwise we could not possibly expect the new American humanism to be pertinent, significant, and valuable.

Moreover, it is equally necessary to realize that contemporary humanism is not the work of Professor Babbitt alone, nor the work of Mr. More alone, but of both together. Each of them is a man of striking, self-contained independence; each, it cannot be doubted, has thought for himself and written from within; — more than this, each in qualities of temper, method, and manner may be sharply and justly contrasted with the other. Nevertheless, their very independence, their very disparities, apparent to the most casual eye, serve after all but to render more impressive the fundamental

[5] *Literature and the American College*, pp. 30-31: "Man himself and the products of his spirit, language, and literature, are treated not as having a law of their own, but as things; as entirely subject to the same methods that have won for science such triumphs over phenomenal nature. . . . The humanities need to be defended to-day against the encroachments of physical science, as they once needed to be against the encroachments of theology." See also *The New Laokoon*, pp. 213-214.

fact that, so far as humanism is concerned, their work has been mutually complementary.[6]

A single instance must here suffice to illustrate this fact. The position that man is, within limits, a morally responsible or accountable being is the indispensable basis of the new humanism, from which all else issues. Repeatedly this is insisted upon throughout Professor Babbitt's books; and along with it the important proposition that, while reason is merely instrumental and cannot lay hold on the eternal world of perfect immaterial reality, still, "the things that are above the reason" may symbolically be represented through the imagination, so that thus the will obedient to "conscience" acts at once as the warrant of the eternal world and as the means of freeing man partially from the shackles and blinding importunities of temporal existence. Yet Mr. Bandler, in the essay before mentioned, justly remarks that in Professor Babbitt's books "the will is scantily described and verbally confused with incongruous issues."[7] To the serious reader this neglect and confusion must be astonishing and profoundly disquieting. But should that reader turn to the writings of Mr. More he would find therein the basis of the new humanism scrupulously and luminously justified. He would find the way prepared, through a long series of critical discriminations, and

[6] Because of this, the question whether one or the other was "the original humanist" is scarcely soluble and, indeed, is unimportant. The evidence from their books clearly indicates that Mr. More was the first to develop the dualism which forms the basis of the new humanism, but that Professor Babbitt was the first to use the word. It is likely enough, however, that this evidence does not fully reveal the truth — that, in fact, the new humanism was born of the friendly intercourse and common studies of the two men during their years of preparation for critical activity. Mr. More, it should be added, has on several occasions acknowledged his "large indebtedness" to Professor Babbitt.

[7] The following *unexplained* references to "things above the reason" and to "free" will may be found in *The New Laokoon* alone: pp. 91, 92, 95, 98, 108, 131, 132, 135, 147, 166, 198, 199, 201, 202, 203, 212, 228, 229, 244.

through difficulties fully realized and candidly faced, for the "Definitions of Dualism" in the Eighth Series of *Shelburne Essays* and for *Platonism*, in which the dualistic philosophy common to Messrs. More and Babbitt receives its full and masterly exposition.

The importance of this I need not stress. "There is a danger," said Thomas Wilson, Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man—"there is a danger in being persuaded before one understands." Moreover, again and again the student of humanism is struck by the manner in which the writings of Messrs. Babbitt and More thus dovetail to form one structure. This is not the place to attempt any careful evaluation of their respective contributions, nor to trace in detail the share of each in their common task. I think, however, that my example is fairly representative; and I do not believe one could better indicate, in a general and brief way, the nature of the relationship between the two than by recalling another maxim of Bishop Wilson, which Arnold made famous sixty years ago, in *Culture and Anarchy:* "Two things a Christian will do: Never go against the best light he has; this will prove his sincerity: and, secondly, to take care that his light be not darkness; that is, that he mistake not his rule by which he ought to go." Professor Babbitt has never gone against the best light he has had; Mr. More has taken care that his light should be not darkness. I would not, in so speaking, be misunderstood. I mean simply that Professor Babbitt has, on the whole, been more interested in the *applications* of humanism to contemporary life and literature and to the interpretation of modern history, than in the establishment of its validity; while Mr. More has, on the whole, been more concerned with the latter effort. But obviously both have concerned themselves with the "two things," and the distinction here suggested is use-

ful only if it be remembered that it is *not* absolute. And both have thus made equally essential contributions to the construction of a new humanism which stands solidly in an alien world because, being built with honesty and insight, it fulfils in terms of present conditions a permanent need.

Humanism, it goes without saying, is concerned with man, and starts from the effort to understand his true nature and thus to determine his best way of life. It began and has lived as a critical activity — as a sceptical attempt to expose the hollowness of men's pretensions, perpetually recurrent, to absolute knowledge of the whole system of reality. Those pretensions always commit men to some barbarous extreme, in conformity to which life and human activity must be interpreted. The interpretation is always forced. Some facts of immediate experience inevitably are denied; and thus sooner or later the inadequacy of accepted generalizations becomes patent, opening the way to a new venture in absolutism, destined to enthusiastic acceptance, followed by gradual disillusionment and eventual rejection.

Socrates was apparently the first man in the western world to understand this vicious circle and to dedicate himself to the attempt to break it. The *Apology* so tells the story that it became — and still remains — the best approach to humanism. Socrates came to think he had a sort of wisdom, "strictly human wisdom"; but "wisdom of a higher sort, something superhuman," something absolute, he had not, and found that humanity had it not. In obedience to divine command, as he construed it, he searched for wisdom amongst those reputed to have it. He went first to an Athenian politician "and conversed with him, and it soon became apparent that to many people and most of all to himself he seemed quite wise, whereas in truth he was not so at all. Thereupon," Socrates con-

tinues, "I undertook to show him how he was wise in opinion only and not in reality; but I only made myself a nuisance to him and to many of those about him. So I went away reflecting that at least I was wiser than this man. Neither of us apparently knows anything much worth while, but he in his ignorance thinks he knows, whereas I neither know nor think I know. Surely I may claim a little more of wisdom than he, in so far as I do not think I know what I do not know." And after long search, with always similar results, Socrates concluded: "The truth would seem to be that God alone is really wise," and "that human wisdom is worth little or nothing at all." Only concerning human nature itself may we know — not perhaps what we might wish — but enough to determine rightly our course. For, consulting honestly our own experience and that of others, we may learn beyond all doubt that "wherever a man takes his post, deeming it best for him there, or wherever the leader places him, there he should abide, awaiting danger, taking account of nothing, be it death or whatsoever else, save only dishonour." This is truth, final, absolute: "that it is an evil and shameful thing to do wrong and to disobey our superior, whether human or divine."

These familiar words, though torn from their context, and without a commentary, still lay open the heart of all serious humanism. And they say precisely what Hulme said when he attempted briefly to characterize the essential factors in the religious attitude. They say, too, precisely what Messrs. More and Babbitt have said in the language of our time, in the light of our present situation.

At the close of the nineteenth century naturalism enjoyed a supremacy unprecedented and almost without serious challenge from educated men. Its triumph resulted from the triumphs of "modern science." Already, I believe, it is be-

coming difficult for young men to realize the position naturalism then held. But no one will understand the rise of the new humanism, nor the world in which we now live and the strength of opposition which it continues, and will continue, to exert against humanism, who does not realize the weight of unescapable evidence on the side of naturalism. It is, really, incalculable;[8] and at the beginning of this century it was everywhere felt to be overwhelming. More, naturalism was welcomed eagerly, in a great burst of optimistic feeling, because of the doctrine of progress in which it was prevailingly formulated, which was commonly thought to receive fresh authentication with each new and profitable triumph of "modern science."

Scepticism concerning the "march of progress" was not, however, wholly quenched. Men of steady vision lived even through the aesthetic and progressive 'nineties. And in 1902 George Gissing wrote: "I hate and fear 'science' because of my conviction that, for long to come if not for ever, it will be the remorseless enemy of mankind. I see it destroying all simplicity and gentleness of life, all the beauty of the world; I see it restoring barbarism under a mask of civilization; I see it darkening men's minds and hardening their hearts; I see it bringing a time of vast conflicts, which will pale into insignificance 'the thousand wars of old,' and, as likely as not, will whelm all the laborious advances of mankind in blood-drenched chaos. . . . . Oh, the generous hopes and aspirations of forty years ago! Science, then, was seen as the deliverer; only a few could prophesy its tyranny, could

[8] I do not, of course, mean to imply that it is conclusive. In an essay entitled "What is Humanism?" (*Virginia Quarterly Review*, April, 1930) I have dealt at some length with "modern science" as the basis of the contemporary species of bigotry which a serious humanism is bound to oppose.

foresee that it would revive old evils and trample on the promises of its beginning."

Yet Gissing, though his eye was prophetic, could see no hope of deliverance. He could not bow reverently before "science" with the multitude, but "to rail against it," he added, "is as idle as to quarrel with any other force of nature." With this, I should suppose, Messrs. More and Babbitt must certainly have agreed when *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was published. For already they must have concluded that man himself always has been and will be his own remorseless enemy, but that, too, man himself contains within him the seeds of his deliverance. Already they must have seen that "science," in its applications merely a channel of blind force, had become with the many an unparalleled agent of greed and distraction; while, amongst the teachers of men, in its implications "science" had become merely the basis of a new and peculiarly subversive absolutism. "Science," then, was a thing indifferent. The evil which Gissing saw was real, but issued from men themselves who, at the same time, recoiled from their own deeds. This was the unambiguous, universal testimony of experience, in our day no less than in the past, and it could have only one meaning — that man had a divided nature.

It is the high distinction of Messrs. More and Babbitt that they reached this conclusion at a time when every living influence was arrayed against it, and that they held their ground and steadily developed a new humanism from this basis without regard for wilful misunderstanding or wilful opposition. They repudiated equally monism of whatever kind and anarchical pluralism because these all sought in different ways to absorb human nature into some one sole reality, some absolute of rationalism or some absolute of sheer irrationalism.

The effect in every case, they affirmed, was the denial of human nature as we know it immediately in experience. And really to be faithful to experience, really to carry out the heralded boast of scientific naturalism, they insisted, was to recognize that man's nature is dual, a paradoxical union of opposites, impenetrable to discursive reason but patent to observation.

This is the real issue raised by contemporary humanism. For dualism is an answer — and, the humanist would say, the only intelligible, completely justified answer — to the deepest question man has to ask. And the answer, in affirming man's moral accountability, gives real meaning and worth to the individual's life. Further, it also affirms the validity of man's distinction, imperfect though it may be, between evil and good, and thus sanctions the effort to achieve and maintain standards of judgment, in terms of which a disciplined life may be led. And a life so disciplined is the only life which is "creative and liberating"— the only life which can eventuate in distinctively human happiness.

And finally, in opposing to contemporary naturalism the paradox of dualism, the humanist in our day ranges himself on the side of religion, without which, as Professor Babbitt has straightforwardly said, humanism cannot subsist.[9] Logically, indeed, the humanism of Messrs. Babbitt and More leads unescapably to a religion based, not on the authority of tradition, but on the philosophical implications of dualism. And this philosophical religion it has been the work of Mr. More's later years to develop in his series of studies, *The Greek Tradition.* In so doing, Mr. More has raised the great question whether or not this religion can be identified with a re-interpreted historic Christianity, and he has thrown the

[9] *Rousseau and Romanticism,* p. 380.

weight of his learning and judgment on the side of an affirmative answer. It is scarcely surprising that this attempted identification should have obscured, in some quarters and for the time-being, the real bearing and import of Mr. More's work. But it is safe to say that, however the question concerning historic Christianity may eventually be answered, still, the more *The Greek Tradition* is studied, and the better it is understood, the more clearly will it be recognized as the logical completion and the crowning work of the new humanism.

ROBERT SHAFER

MUSIC CHRONICLE

Aspects of Gabriel Fauré

Gabriel Fauré is known in this country almost entirely through works written before he had attained his forty-second year. Among these are the First Violin Sonata, the two quartets for piano and strings, a few piano pieces, and such songs as *Les Berceaux*, *Après un Reve*, *Clair de Lune*, *Les Roses d'Ispahan*, which are on every singer's program. Although he lived to the age of seventy-nine and wrote copiously up to the end, little or no curiosity is shown about the productions of his last thirty-seven years. The Requiem Mass, Opus 45, has never, so far as I know, been given an integral performance in this country; nor has the Opera *Pénélope* ever been performed here. Of the great song-cycles, *La Bonne Chanson*, Opus 61, written in 1891, is known to a few singers; *La Chanson d'Eve*, Opus 95 (1907), to none that I have ever spoken to or heard of. His Theme and Variations, for piano, Opus 73, *Prométhée*, Opus 82 (requiring a somewhat elaborate setting), the Second Violin Sonata, Opus 108 — to mention only a few of the high points, and to say nothing of the productions of the flowering last five years of his life — have all suffered similar neglect. It is the more regrettable since these later works are in many ways far closer to us in aim and idiom than the early ones. But before discussing the relation of his later style to present tendencies, it would be well to try to determine why its evolution was not more generally followed.

The reasons are perhaps fairly obvious. For one thing, Fauré never showed any interest in orchestration. He regarded it as of such little importance that it is not even certain how much of his orchestral scoring he did himself. That of *Prométhée*, designed for performance in the open air, and calling for a large number of brass instruments, was entrusted to the leader of a military band. Most of the scoring of *Pénélope* is said to have been realized either by Vincent D'Indy or Paul Dukas, but the secret has been carefully kept, and it is only safe to assume that Fauré was not responsible for very much of it. His neg-

lect of the orchestra runs parallel to his general lack of interest in all special effects of sonority, whatever the instrument or combination of instruments he happened to employ. The accompaniments of his songs show little variety of figuration, considering the large number he wrote. They are for the most part based on time-worn formulae, consisting either of straight four-part harmony (sometimes broadened by the addition of an octave), or else of broken or syncopated chords. Those of the latest songs are in general even more simplified than those of the earlier ones: With the exception of *Danseuse* (from *Mirages*, Opus 113) one finds nothing in them so *recherché* as the accompaniments of *Les Berceaux*, *Mandoline* or *Eau Vivante* (from *La Chanson d'Eve*). The same thing is true of his works for piano alone. These contain nothing in the way of pianistic effects which would have surprised Schumann. In his chamber works there are a few exceptions to this general rule, but they are so rare, and for the most part of such minor importance, that they hardly need to be mentioned — save perhaps for the beautiful effect of the octaves played by the viola and 'cello, *con sordino* at the close of the Andante of the Second Piano Quartet.

Individualities as diverse as those of Strauss, Debussy and Strawinsky are nowhere more apparent than in the character of their instrumentation. The individuality of Strauss is of course chiefly apparent in his handling of the orchestra; that both of Debussy and Strawinsky equally so in their handling of smaller combinations, and of the piano. Allowing these three to be perhaps the most widely-recognized landmarks in the musical evolution of the past forty years, it is evident that through them and their followers the world has been brought largely to appraise individualities on an aspect which in Fauré remains practically blank.

The same period of time (dating back approximately to the moment when Fauré's new productions ceased to excite general interest) has witnessed the gradual breaking up of the old harmonic system, with attendant searchings after new idiom and new matter for expression. In this also Fauré had no share. Within what remained essentially the bounds of the old system (though he did much to liberate and enrich it in the way of modulations, irregular cadences, and the movement of basses), he attained to an extraordinary freedom and subtlety of expression. But his freedom, unlike Debussy's, was of a dis-

creet, internal kind, such as could give scandal only to the professional musician — as Saint-Saëns was at first scandalized at the freedom of *La Bonne Chanson,* applauded by an unsuspecting public. The fact that it was founded rather on the expansion of traditional principles than on emancipation from them, deprived him of that external brilliance of originality which contributed so much to Debussy's influence. That he sincerely respected Debussy we gather from the fact that he asked him to sit on the Juries of the Conservatoire shortly after having, in 1905, been named director of it. Such a request must at that time have caused a good deal of comment in official musical circles. But beyond that of respect, his feeling for Debussy hardly went. Never greatly tempted, or even impressed, by the latter's innovations, he continued to pursue his own train of thought with the same quiet integrity that had steered him through his earlier and far more stormy experience of Wagner.

Yet it may seem in a way surprising that he should have evaded Debussy more completely than he did Wagner. (*Prométhée* is not without traces of the latter's influence.) That he was nearly twenty years older and hence sure of his own style by the time Debussy's had become formed, need not have prevented him from being influenced by the younger man — perhaps in somewhat the way Haydn was in his old age influenced by Mozart; for just as a certain Mozartian complexity of feeling sometimes finds its way into the later Haydn, so one might have expected the last act of *Pelléas,* or the pathetic anxious diffidence of "*Veux-tu? Viendras-tu? — Ce sera le dernier soir . . .* " of Act IV, to have left its mark on Fauré. But there appears to have been something not wholly sympathetic to him in Debussy's superfine uneasiness of sensibility — a nostalgia seldom far from despair. Perhaps, too, he disliked what may have seemed to him facile in certain Debussyist harmonic progressions, and superficial (or tending to become so) in the emphasis he laid on color. But we need feel little regret at Fauré's having apparently remained untouched by Debussy's "*petite fille qui pleure au bord de l'eau,*" since the things that *did* touch him led him to imagine such pages as bring to a close the first and last acts of *Pénélope,* the close of the first movement of the G-minor Quartet, or the long lines of the Allegro of the Second Violin Sonata, so buoyant that they seem to be lapped by sheer light. Nor need we regret that he kept his independence in the matter of style.

Yet it is in any case certain that in proportion as Debussy's work began to be recognized and his influence to spread, Fauré automatically became neglected, all but forgotten — a local Parisian product, whose new works were even there received with understanding only by a comparatively small group of initiates.

Later, when realms of sonority and rhythm had been still further explored by Strawinsky and others, and emancipation from traditional harmonic principles was in many quarters complete, Fauré's world came to seem more restricted than ever. What has perhaps chiefly helped Strawinsky to win the large following he enjoys today is the great power and individuality of his rhythms. But Fauré's individuality is hardly better revealed in his choice of rhythms than in his choice of sonorities. Indeed, his poverty of rhythmic resource is sometimes a serious fault. At the opening of the last act of *Pénélope*, where Ulysses enters, full of rage and vengeance, and music with a direct, brutal rhythm is required, Fauré finds nothing better than a kind of sombre, heavy-footed Scherzo — adequate enough, but not to be compared in effectiveness with the music belonging to scenes of less violent character. The close of Act II (after Ulysses has been hailed by the shepherds as their king), has, on the contrary, great rhythmic strength; but this arises from the contrapuntal handling of the Ulysses *motif*, combining and dovetailing it in such a way as to make something highly complex and forceful out of elements not especially so in themselves.

But if rhythm never became for him the almost separate vehicle for expression that it so often is in Strawinsky, and if his rhythms lack originality and often variety, nevertheless, owing to the wonderful freedom and elasticity of his basses, they are seldom tedious or flat. For the bass (possibly because it is the voice that comes nearest to reproducing the toneless accents — of purely rhythmic value — of the drum), where it is alive and freely moving, imparts rhythmic life and rhythmic freedom of movement to the whole. An admirable instance of this is to be found in *Cygne sur l'Eau* (from Mirages). Immediately preceding the words "*Il glisse, roi hautain* —" the accompaniment begins an appropriately dark, oily, sliding motion (extremely simple, as always, in figuration, but not so harmonically) which continues on for two pages. What chiefly sustains our rhythmic interest in this passage is the bass, moving it would seem, with com-

plete independence of the melody, and yet giving depth and substance to its fleeting suggestions — as on the last note of the phrase, *"Quand il passe, au seuil d'une lune d'argent,"* it sweeps up, like a rolling wake, a full measure behind it, and completes the cadence which, on the word *d'argent,* had remained suspended. *Reflets dans l'Eau,* of the same series, though moving throughout its considerable length at a most tranquil pace, is again saved by the bass (at least during a large portion of it) from a rhythmic monotony which one would suppose bound to overtake it. For though here the bass maintains a complete regularity of accent for twelve long measures, its line is so free, its profile so expressive, that every note of it adds momentum to the whole — we welcome each accent as it falls, though it always falls in the same place. Curiously enough, the first moment when the rhythm begins to lag is when Fauré halts the steady motion of the right hand and assigns it to the bass. This procedure, instead of adding new life to the rhythm, rather makes it languish, for the reason that the bass no longer moves so freely, but follows the treble in a regular and somewhat hollow-sounding downward sequence, so that its accents fall flatly and monotonously on the ear.

A treatise could be written on Fauré's bass: his way of reserving its entrance in a lower register, as in *Crépuscle* (from *La Chanson d'Eve*), or as in Danseuse (at the words *vase svelte,* and later at *pieds etroits*), on a principle which he undoubtedly learned from Bach, but which few since Bach have applied so effectively. Again, one could treat of his valuable extension of certain laws governing the bass's direction of movement, but that would be difficult to illustrate without the musical text. Not to listen to the bass when hearing a work of Fauré, is generally to miss half of what he has to say. I have emphasized its importance as a rhythmic factor. Needless to add, the freedom which characterizes it is of equal importance harmonically.

Fauré's individuality, if it failed to leave its mark on his use of, and method of combining, instruments, or on his choice of rhythms, is apparent in every chord he employed, though he never invented any new ones. As Nadia Boulanger once wrote of him in this connection: *"Entre ses mains, ces choses usuelles sont devenues précieuses."* There is hardly a progression, hardly a modulation or cadence, especially in his later work, that, taken from its context, would not still retain the unmistakable stamp of his authorship. There are, of course, certain

progressions which he uses more frequently than others, certain suspensions which he never tired of, and made, as it were, definitely his own. But underlying these more obvious earmarks there is a flexibility and precision of nuance, and a depth of expressiveness, in his handling of straight four-part harmony, that one hardly finds equalled in anyone but Bach.

Now that Strawinsky has rediscovered the uses of consonant harmony, that many of the younger men are tending in a like direction, and that our ears have grown so accustomed to extremes of dissonance that we are no longer disconcerted either by its presence or absence, it would seem as though the moment were right for a more attentive and careful savouring of Fauréan harmonies. Sheer dissonance, considered as an independent factor in the pleasure or bewilderment or pain caused by a piece of music, depends for its effect upon the surprise or shock it produces; and our judgment of a work on that basis alone must always be equally superficial, whether favourable or otherwise. Certain exclusively and violently dissonant works (such as *Arcanes*, of Edgar Varèse) may seem far more effective at first hearing than at second. For what we ultimately appraise a composition on is its internal clarity and organization: its bare skeleton, however elaborately clothed, must be understandable and solid. I believe it was Gédalge (the only teacher Milhaud will admit owing anything to, and no enemy to the moderns), who maintained that if a work didn't hold together when analyzed in terms of its bass and melody alone (that is, omitting all inner voices and completed harmonies), it was a sure sign of its having some structural defect. Such a test, any of Fauré's works would pass triumphantly. Not only would their framework easily stand the strain, but, so rigid was his economy, that in many cases surprisingly little of their character or meaning would be lost in the process. In all these ways, solidity of structure, economy of means, clarity and directness of statement, such works as the Second Violin Sonata, the later songs, the Second Quintet, realize an aim that is much in view today.

A further quality of his work, and one that would win him many followers were his work better known, is his power of prolonging a melodic line over a very long period, without ever letting it flag or draw on other than its own, inherent, resources. From countless instances of this, none could be more aptly cited than the first period of

the Andante of the Second Quintet. The first eight measures, before the entrance of the piano, may seem introductory in character, but as Charles Koechlin has rightly pointed out, they should not be so considered. From the first upward-moving interval announced by the viola — a kind of *sursum corda* towards some visioned promise — to the large-spanned phrase of overflowing certainty reached twelve measures later, and reaffirmed in a downward chromatic succession of keys, that soften the light but if anything increase the certainty — as a landscape will seem to stand out more clearly with approaching dusk — and so through to the final cadence, the promise fulfilled, the eagerness appeased; — the whole thing is one line, a single *élan*.

THEODORE CHANLER

THEATRE CHRONICLE

The Green Pastures is probably the most interesting production of the year. It is amazingly good, in an entirely un-"Broadway" fashion. It is one of those rare productions that please everybody — even the newspaper reviewers, in this happy emergency, being found on the right side of the fence; though many of them, not content with being right for once, must needs go and be *too* right, and ladle out their ever-ready stock of meaningless superlatives. Some of them have taken *The Green Pastures* as their text in sermons on the commercial theatre, and tried to deduce from its existence the uselessness of permanent groups. It would perhaps be instructive to enquire what the elements in this success may be. Every success is of course in some measure a happy accident; but unless one sits on the side-lines and merely notes the result, one is obliged at least to try to see what it is that makes one play better than another.

First of all, there is the producer, "Lawrence Rivers," a stockbroker who already had several unsuccessful ventures to his credit, and who therefore cannot be given all the credit for the success. He must have had more courage and good taste than the Guild, which refused the script; but these qualities are insufficient without a "vehicle" to exercise them on.

The play itself was made by Mr. Marc Connelly from *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun*, a volume of Bible stories in negro dialect by Roark Bradford. The stage version, which Mr. Connelly also directed, is vastly more distinguished than the stories, so that Mr. Connelly apparently deserves a large share of the credit. He seems to have changed the book mainly by allowing the intensely dramatic quality of the Bible stories themselves to come out in the simplest terms. Indeed, the use of negro dialect and a negro cast simply enabled him to realize these splendid myths. His material suggested a method for dramatizing parts of the Bible. And it gave him a thread on which to hang the various episodes: the negroes are more like the Children of Israel than any other Americans, being a separate tribe, united by race and persecution; and *The Green Pastures* is simply the story of the troubles that God has with the chosen people from

Adam to the coming of Christ. The Negro Children of Israel here bear somewhat the same relation to the New Yorkers that the Italian nobles bore to an Elizabethan audience, they are accepted not realistically but typically. This fact, plus the naturally naïve and dramatic quality of the negroes themselves, enables the play to succeed with an entirely unrealistic method. All of which is only an attempt at analysis, not at guessing how Mr. Connelly did it; but it may serve to indicate the importance of his result.

In this he was very much helped by the acting. The man who played God had never acted before. All of the actors had the compelling honesty of those who really "make believe." This is the rarest quality on Broadway, and the most necessary for the theatre.

Finally, there was the designer, Mr. Robert Edmond Jones. Mr. Jones has saved many a bad show from hopeless mediocrity, and he has been able, with his tact, his skill, and his experience to set the style of many a more ambitious effort which might have been lost without him. In recent years, for example, he has performed this service for *Machinal*, *Serena Blandish*, and *The Commodore Marries*, to name a few that occur to one at once. In this case he was right again. The cut-out wings and the treadmill might have been taken from a nineteenth-century Southern Opera House. The designing was in key with the acting, and went far toward uniting the whole show and making it comprehensible. At the same time most of the colors and lighting captured a feeling of Sabbath freshness. The only scene which did not quite come off was that in Pharaoh's palace.

Such are the factors that contributed toward the happy result. And it must be admitted that most of them are necessarily connected with the commercial theatre. No permanent group can do a negro play the way negro actors do it. The one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars which the production is said to have cost would support a modest repertory company for a year and enable them to do five small productions. Good directors and designers are naturally interested in seeing their ideas executed as well as possible, which means expensively. Producers who want a theatre rather than a successful production are rare: it is one thing to gamble on a production, another to take the responsibility of saying baldly, "I want a certain kind of theatre." In the first case the market, which we are all used to considering a worthy and serious arbiter, is decisive; in the second the desire for a theatre.

But note that the very circumstances which make possible an occasional triumph in the commercial theatre, vastly diminish its importance. The actor who never played before may never play again. The purchase of this negro cast establishes nothing but this one play. The exhibition of negro players to a Times Square audience is hardly more significant than showing them Rhinehart's company or the Chauve Souris, which owe nothing to New York but a night's lodging, and stand practically no chance of alleviating its chaos. The designer and the author-director who so successfully coöperated here may never get together again. We must all be grateful to the producers of *Green Pastures* for getting such a beautiful result out of the unstable and stupid elements of the theatre; but it is they, rather than the commercial theatre itself, that deserve our gratitude and admiration.

Mei Lan-Fang

The performances of the Chinese actor were of the greatest interest to those who hope to see the development of a "classical" art. His acting is highly conventional according to our western notions—there is first of all, the traditional sign language by means of which passing through doors, riding horseback, rowing in boats, etc., is indicated on a stage devoid of realistic settings and properties. Then there is the almost continuous musical accompaniment and the dancing movements which continue all the time the actor is on the stage. These elements, however, are soon seen to define a *medium*, in which the artist is then able to get surprisingly realistic effects. This medium is simply the actor himself in command of all his expressive means, voice, body, rhythm—on a scale which should be the envy of our naturalistic performers. The plays, one is told, are as traditional as the stage medium, and as familiar to the audience. The audience then is interested solely in what the actor does: in his contribution. The actor, with everything established, can devote himself to the proper business of the artist, which appears to be conceived here as "imitation of life."

Imitating a drunken courtesan in terms of such a wide and well-defined medium as Mei Lan-Fang's is a very different matter from reproducing the actions of a drunken courtesan so as to create the illusion of life. The obligation to get one's effects in terms of a certain medium seems to force one to select only the significant points. There is, in fact, one begins to see, a difference between imitation and re-

production. An actress who should try to be a bawd in a realistic play would invite the audience to look at the object itself, the very bawd in question; while a Chinese audience watching Mei Lan-Fang's portrayal would be interested in the act of imitation. That I suppose is why the Chinese see nothing strange in a man's playing only female roles. They are interested in the artist's picture of the bawd in a certain medium.

Notice also that this is a very different matter from being interested in Mei Lan-Fang's personality. The definiteness of the medium prevents the possibility of the "self-expression" of romantic acting. Indeed, Mei Lan-Fang contemplates, he does not express. No one who saw him could doubt that he derived plenty of personal satisfaction from his performance, which was indeed full to the brim of gusto. But this enjoyment was of the same quality as the audience's; it came from sharing a perception with the audience. Perhaps these are some of the reasons why this acting had an authority and a universality which enabled it to carry even on Times Square, across every sort of barrier of language and unfamiliar convention. But it had behind it not only Mei Lan-Fang's years of patient training and study, but an enormously long theatre tradition.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

ART CHRONICLE

Towards Stronger Reasons for Deploring American Painting

The Art Chronicle in the last issue has raised objections. It gave no evidence for dismissing all American painting except a few landscapes by Homer, Hopper, Marin and Burchfield. One of the objectors to this despotic kind of cablegram was Mr. James W. Lane, who was kind enough to write an admirable expostulation, well worth printing at length if we had the space. Mr. Lane has made me reconsider my position. He must, however, forgive my not being able to reply to him, since I do not know nearly so much as he does about contemporary painting and since we differ on matters of taste. For instance, when Mr. Lane says: "That 'salt freshness' and that 'uncanny sensitiveness to the hour of the day' (of Marin and Burchfield) which Mr. Mayor would reserve for the American school of landscape painting are also observable, respectively, in Marquet, Asselin, Friesz, and Camoins, in Sisley, Renoir, André, and Pierre" — I can only stammer that I have never heard of Camoins or Pierre, but that I do not observe this "American note" in the rest, "respectively" or otherwise. After all, our best American landscapes may owe their unique note to our startling American weather.

The causes for the general insipidity of American painting, and its bashfulness toward men and women, lie deep in our character. Machines excite us more than persons, hence our school of arid architectural draughtsmen (Demuth, Sheeler, Blume, etc.) who focus on a steel construction as though they were sterilized cameras. Mr. Lane's letter parades the list of our painters of persons and genre: George Bellows, "Pop" Hart, Jerome Myers, William Glackens, George Luks, Everett Shinn, Gifford Beal, Jonas Lie and Guy Péne du Bois. To my notion, these painters were not "human" but half-hearted; not one risked a vision, like Goya, or had the sad courage to realize that only rubbish lay to hand, and still attempt to build with that only, like Eakins or Burchfield. I would give all Mr. Lane's portraits for some of those anonymous and intense New England "primitives" of about 1800, those heads that grip one like the donor in the Avignon *Pieta*,

and I would scrap all Mr. Lane's genre paintings for A. B. Frost's illustrations to *Br'er Rabbit* and F. D. Steele's vignettes for *Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*. These latter no more pretended to immorality than Phil May did when he sketched for *Punch*, but their smiling veracity warms us still, when almost all their period has perished.

However, the real answer to Mr. Lane's list of American genre painters is Covarrubias. Compared with him, they seem never quite to have grasped their subjects, either as observers of their scene or as painters reconstructing it. Covarrubias has more than his draughtsmanship to teach us (even though he probably draws better than anyone else in either of the Americas); his deeper value lies in his uncompromising pertinence. He has none of that gelatinous padding that prevents most of us in the United States from ever quite *realizing* anything. His contact in seeing and in doing is fearless and instant. Perhaps this relentless clarity is as typically Latin Catholic as our evasion is American Protestant. Few Americans have dared admit that they were common men and women, as Walt Whitman and Isadora Duncan did, and be unabashed by whatever stirred in them. We live in dread of mutiny, we deny the existence of our revolting members, and so they atrophy. (We know that once we diverge from our ethic of total prohibition, we have no canon of moderation to guide us.) So we whittle ourselves, and each other, into hexagons, and then we all interlock into a unit, like cells in a sapless honeycomb. A man who is not exactly hexagonal finds no place in our scheme and rolls anywhere around, loose and useless. Now an artist is "different" because he stands a little apart from his time in order to see it. Yet for us Americans a man who is different does not exist, or at best exists, like the fishes, in a sealed element. A man will thrive on opposition, he can endure misconception, but what is he to do when he is told he does not exist? — or when he is not even *told*? Since our artists have no general public that likes and dislikes them, they are reduced to producing for each other's studios, and their work has no general usefulness, being geared to nothing. Few have struck a public to stimulate them with its reactions, as Covarrubias and Burchfield have done. Almost all our artists struggle with the void and shout into silence. Their pattern and their symbol is that remote and meaningless congregation that stands in a trance around Alfred Stieglitz's monologue.

A. Hyatt Mayor

MOVIE CHRONICLE

Some time ago The National Board of Review saw fit to select "the four best motion pictures ever made". They chose *The Birth of a Nation*, *Potemkin*, *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. The result is curious. American productions get the benefit of historical importance only, in the naming of Griffith's picture. The logical choice would have been King Vidor's *Big Parade*. But then, Ernst Lubitsch's *Patriot* and *Marriage Circle*, Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* and *Merry Widow* or Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* and *Docks of New York* find no place in the list. The most surprising omission is F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise*, which, in the first part, at least, is the most perfect movie I have ever seen.

Eisenstein's *Potemkin* is preferred over Pudowkin's *The End of St. Petersburg*. There is less to quarrel with in this choice. In comparison, however, Pudowkin's film comes off somewhat better than Eisenstein's. *The End of St. Petersburg* is, perhaps, more literary in subject-matter, but it is also of more even and steady dramatic quality. *Potemkin* suffers from the defects of episodic treatment which *Ten Days That Shook the World* has in excess. In both pictures Eisenstein uses the newsreel method. It is an excellent one for an impressionistic and emphatic account of events. I do not mean here the mere rapid shuffling together of objects and people, the characteristic element of *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Rather, I mean Eisenstein's tendency to single out scenes for detailed treatment: the action on the steps leading down to the harbor or the motion of the ship's engines in *Potemkin*; or, again, the soldier's at the feet of the enormous statues or Kerensky's ascent of the marble stairs in *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Objects and persons have the same value in such scenes that they would in an excellent news-shot. The scenes mentioned are dramatic in themselves and impress themselves on the memory. They do, nevertheless, give a static quality to the pictures as a whole. The drama Eisenstein is representing stands still during such scenes, for they do not fall smoothly in with the rest of the film.

Pudowkin obtains shots of equal excellence in *The End of St. Pet-*

ersburg: the sudden revolt of the soldiers or the scenes on top the Winter Palace. They are remembered, however, as climaxes, as part of the general movement of the drama. Pudowkin makes use of the newsreel method but in a more subdued fashion: scenes are emphasized in their relationship with the other scenes in the picture. And curiously enough, in spite of the smaller area of events with which *Potemkin* is concerned, individual characters and faces stand out more vividly from *The End of St. Petersburg.*

The work of both Russians is certainly of a higher order than *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari.* The German picture, an interesting curio, no doubt, and good entertainment, has some historical importance. It demonstrated the use angles could be put to; but in this respect, was nowhere near as successful as *Variety* where the camera itself was used to obtain "angles" and not simply photographs of angular scenery. *Variety,* both as an experiment and as a good picture, drops behind *The Last Laugh,* which pays more strict attention to subordinating camera effects to the story it is telling; just as Pudowkin uses the newsreel technique with less obviousness and bareness than Eisenstein.

Of French films my own knowledge is small. I have seen only one other, *Crainquebille.* At the time, 1924, it seemed quite good. So I am at a loss to say how *The Passion of Joan of Arc* compares with other French movies. By ordinary standards, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is not a successful movie.

In it there is no movement, no speed; the symbolism, particularly the attempt to duplicate the baiting of Jesus, in Joan's cell, is cheap and tawdry; the climaxes, Joan's signing of the confession and her recantation, and death, are spent before they are reached; the dramatic moments come as a relief from the main action, for example the young monk's declaration before the court; and the close-up style is monotonous. The close-up is no more intelligently used in the French piece than in *Over the Hill* which gave endless attention to the glycerine-stained face of Mary Carr. The sorrowful, bewildered face of a saint surrounded by tormentors is no more interesting in constant exposure than the sorrowful, bewildered face of a cinema-mother surrounded by ungrateful children. An instance of effective use of faces as detail could be found in the early scenes among wretches in *Scaramouche,* made some years ago by Rex Ingram, a director of

no great talent. A camera, the Frenchmen forgot, says a thing once and for all. Its virtue lies in saying a number of things differently.

Reasons for liking *The Passion of Joan of Arc* are not difficult to discover. Joan's character and story have a constant appeal and her history subsequent to burning is an interesting one. These reasons fall beyond the picture itself. No particular credit is due the producers for following the documents of the trial so closely. A measure of dramatic license would have helped considerably. In fact, the most fatal error in style was made by devotion to accuracy; the early part of the picture depends so much upon what the prosecutors said and what Joan said back and the consternation that followed. Such a method requires too many subtitles, a fault good silent movies were steadily removing. The suspicion is immediately prompted that the picture would have made a better talkie, to provide for the exchanges between Joan and the court. I doubt it, if the same undramatic treatment by episodes, close-ups and the other enumerated faults was kept. For the main end of a drama, play, talkie or silent movie, is to be dramatic. If nothing else, the elaborate preparation by the camera and the actors for the ensuing riot would have destroyed any dramatic quality Joan's death might have had.

Clarence Brown's *Anna Christie* has little to recommend it. The talking version of O'Neill's play fails where the silent one, made by Blanche Sweet, six or seven years ago, succeeded. The talkie follows sedulously and foolishly the construction of a bad play, with two deviations from the original: the scenes at Coney Island and the long introduction concerning Marie Dressler. The comedienne is amusing, but, so far as the drama is concerned, her portion is too large. Neither of these deviations represent the proper procedure in transferring a play to the screen.

Plays, good, bad or indifferent, need almost complete rewriting when they are made into movies. The introduction of dialogue has not lessened the need for distinct movie treatment of whatever material is used. Producers and directors took some time in learning this in the early days; it is noteworthy that talkies like *Close Harmony* or *Untamed* are good because they follow the method of the silent film.

The method of the stage requires emphasis of dialogue and action that hinder the movies. Entrances and exits have to be differently planned on the screen. The close-up cannot serve as a substitute for

exchanges between characters on the stage, where the stage-picture serves as a constant background. Movement and speed on the stage have a different meaning than they have on the screen; for dialogue and action can carry the burden of transitions in the theatre that the camera must assume in the movie. The distortions of the natural size and relative positions of objects and gestures, necessary in any film, are out of place in a play. They do not then receive the kind of attention the director of a movie must give to them. Sounds accompanying action of the stage have an evenness not possible to the movies, where they must necessarily be emphasized and well selected. Again, the camera must be used to fill in the gaps. The suppression of sounds as a dramatic device is constantly made much of on the stage; for the movies it has little possibility. The screen cannot even accept the divisions into acts and scenes which the stage can put to advantage. Events in the movies have a different serial order than on the stage; the time element has a different place. Dull movies, like *Journey's End* and *Anna Christie* will continue to appear so long as methods of presentation ill-adapted to the medium of the motion picture are used.

KENNETH WHITE

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NEWSPAPERS, HISTORY, ETC.

It may be taken as almost axiomatic that nothing that any politician or " statesman " says , and that nothing any newspaper prints , is of any interest or value in itself. (This is even more violently true of monthly publications conducted mainly to catch advertisements.) For the careful historian a state paper or the letter of a ruler proves that at a certain date the said ruler or said government wished its opponent to believe , or hoped its opponent wd. believe , the statements therein contained.

At a certain point the difference in the drift of such statements begins to have an interest for the historian and the critic. The American press , despite the wails of extremists , is " free " relatively , that is to say it is often inaccurate : no journalist who is not both wilfully and by nature inaccurate can live by his profession. The "great journalist" has an almost beautiful talent for taking the edge off a statement , for adding just that touch of vagueness which makes his copy legible to the savage reader.

For the past fifteen years I have tried (never with the faintest success) to make occasional super-Americans understand the difference between the British centrally controlled press and the American " free press. " The difference being that different American papers will tell ten different lies about a given situation on the same day , & even in some cases the truth. The British press during the epoch referred to (and I believe for a long period before that) always told the *same lie* and always displayed the identical set of silences concerning the identical set of " unwelcome ideas or topics ". For example , in 1917 we might take it for granted that " distribution , " Zaharof , credit control , trading with the enemy etc., wd. not be mentioned.

As America's " intellectual life " was for a long time closely connected with that of England , all this has some bearing on our state of enlightenment. No American can understand the English by mere-

ly reading their printed matter. The best approach is via Levy-Bruhl's *Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inferieures:*

" un vase de forme traditionnelle ne servira qu'à l'usage ordinaire de ces vases; et on n'aura pas à craindre les ' pouvoirs ' inconnus que pourrait posséder une forme nouvelle " etc.

The first sign of any change or rift in the British hermetism appeared last summer in Baldwin's election manifesto. In this he had definitely to mention a number of things that had been sacred, secret, and taboo in 1917 to 1919. The details do not matter, all that concerns us as critics of literature and as estimators of the openess or shutness of the English state of mind is that the taboos were openly *named.* (Students of economics and politics may note that Mr Baldwin lost the election. Mr B's opponents wd. think that this was due to his being wrong. The true Englander will think that Mr B. was *religiously* wrong and that he ought not to have spoken , ought not to have named the taboos.)

More recently I have noted yet another move from the era of totem toward the age of reason. For some months the *Sunday Referee* has shown a disposition to print open discussion of a number of topics. The war , for example , ended over a decade ago. The resultant bureaucracy is not yet very much discussed , but the subject of war itself has received a good deal of attention. Each week the Referee removes one more fleck of paint and brass polish from the effigy of Military Glory. On March 9th they printed ¾ of a column of discussion of a German publication dealing with the increase of imports into Holland and the Scandinavia countries from 1914 to 1919.

I take it that during the war " everyone " in London knew that the war was being prolonged because traders on both sides were selling "necessities " to neutrals with the knowledge or intentional ignorance that these necessities wd. help the other side to go on fighting.[1] There was the definite scandal of " Mertons , " etc.

It is however both ironical and interesting that Germany shd. be letting the cats out of the bags.

We now have two clearly defined classes of war profiteers:

A. those that sell at magnificent price to their own governments.

B. those that sell at still better price to the enemy (technically via some neutral.)

[1] cf. E. P. Cantos XVIII and XIX.

This is a distinct gain because all wars , all accentuation of frontiers , copyright infamicities , barriers to free communication of ideas , such as section 211 of the U. S. penal code, etc., impede the intellectual life. In somewhat similar manner all idiotic laws which impede centralization are also a detriment. The hatred of centralization from 1100 A.D. onward , and probably from 11000 B.C. onward , has been largely due to the fear that the central power (magical , ecclesiastical , political , policeical , or whatever) wd. interfere with the predilections and customs of the local groups. America has lost ten years and probably thirty years of intellectual development by reason of inane commotion caused by the XVIIIth abomination , which was caused by . . . . ignorance of history , and other less pardonable causes. Money that shd. be spent on enlightenment is spent on tyranny etc ., all of which deflects from my particular point, which , however , I can summarize :

One English paper is breaking through the insular taboos. The actual processes and mechanisms causing and prolonging war are being clearly and openly discussed even in England. On the other hand , the largest American endowment specifically aimed at the study of this subject continually refuses to pay any attention to the *causes* of war and devotes all its resources to a tabulation of results, as anyone can see for himself by referring to the annual report of that Endowment. Dr. Butler, the figurehead or trained seal of this institution, contents himself with elegies on the state of international poesy.

There are points , a very limited number , at which the government , or rather the misgovernment , of a country becomes the affair of an author , however determined he may be to attend to his own affairs in the narrowest possible sense of that term. I might almost say that the good government of a country is no affair of an author's , and that only outrageous mismanagement of specific details concerns him. So long as laws are made with even moderate sense , a writer shd. stick to his composition as hermetically as an inventing chemist sticks to his laboratory.

If , however , a writer whose subject matter is and forever must be the mind and nature of man , is unaware of what is going on in his immediate temporal and spatal circumjacence , he is a mere fool.

When carried to a certain degree, the maladministration of an educational system , stupidity in the teaching of history , idiotic laws

due to ignorance of legislature, both attain and are due to the mental realm and the indolence or cowardice of the literati.

Contempt for the literary generations that preceded us in America will increase as their mental limitations become more obvious and the temporary extenuating circumstances sink into the muddy unknown ; i.e., one will see what but no longer why such and such individuals were regarded as the national writers.

Certain specific laws and regulations are contrary to the welfare of letters in America in 1930, namely (1.) article 211 of the penal code (re/ contraceptives and the classics , empowering analphabetic postal clerks to interfere with circulation of same).

(2) our copyright law , originally designed to favour the printing trade at the expense of the mental life of the country. The congressmen who are trying to purge this clot, and the registrar of copyright , now combine to inform me that the printers have seen the light . The rest of their information amounts to a statement that the blockage is due to the bureaucratic mind and a mania for " getting it all into one bill " ; i.e., the welfare of letters is postponed until cinema and radio , and by now I suppose talki-o and smellio , rights have been puddled and muddled and strained out to the satisfaction of all the " parties interested ".

(3) all extant and future impediments to travel ; all accentuations of frontiers. I say " and future , " because as fast as a Quinn or a sane man of any kind eliminates any such clog , some degenerate imbecile proposes a new aggravation.

No man liveth to himself or dieth to himself. These disparate and apparently unrelated impediments have general roots in common.
I. The general ignorance of what the democratic idea in the first place WAS. That is to say , the idea of representative govt. was not that legislative bodies shd. represent the momentary idiocy of the multitude or be merely registrative. The relatively small number of colonials meant each district and section to pick the men best qualified to make laws , by which they meant educated , having perhaps some knowledge of law , history (even of letters) or some sense of responsibility .
II. It is a flaming outrage that men of the calibre of Bryan , Borah , Volstead and Smoot shd. follow Washington , J. Q. Adams , Jefferson , in the national annals. It is a regression from the XVIIIth

into the XVIIth century. Moreover , it cd. not occur if history were properly taught in the grade schools.

I may say that having emerged from the grade schools , and having taken some specialized university courses in American History , I never came on a trace of the method desired. From the reports of the American Historical Assn. it might even be doubted whether the professional historians have any clear idea what they are at , but at any rate , and as minimum , one is safe in claiming that even the "well-educated American" has very dim ideas re/ what Washington , Adams and Jefferson aimed at. Brodes Adams, in his introduction to H. A.'s *Degradation of Democratic Dogma* , brushes the particular questions of Washington and J. Q. Adams , but does not " erect it into a principle " , or take any notice of Jefferson (a party opponent) .

The Sane Method of Studying History consists (or wd. if it were ever practiced, consist) in learning what certain great protagonists intended , and to what degree they failed in forcing their program on the mass .

For example : Washington's limited objective re/ the Potomac waterway (cited by B. Adams.)

J. Q. Adams' intention of conserving national wealth for purpose of national education and civilization (cited by B. Adams.)

Jefferson's continual struggle to import civilization from Europe (getting measurements of la Maison Carrée, etc.; not cited by either B. or H. Adams.)

If the American school child (infant or adult) were taught to regard the historic figures as men who tried to construct something , instead of being told that they cut down cherry trees , prayed in the snow etc. , the American voter wd. be less likely to approve a relapse into the mental obfuscations of Thuringia in the age of Louis XIV.

That is to say : at the end of the Thirty Years War certain facts were obvious to Leibniz which have not yet dawned upon terbakker-chewin savages from Utah and Missouri, elected by and for the peasantry of them states.

Incidentally , when Mr. Menken invented the phrase "American peasantry , " people thought he was being funny. His error was to omit photographs . He shd. have collaborated with Doris Ulmann.

I don't mean to limit this "method " to American History. As

method it applies anywhere , to Leibniz himself , or to Leo X.

The second phase of the method is , obviously , the study of why the intentions failed or succeeded to the degrees recorded. *E.g.*, Leo X. failed or very considerably sidetracked the Renaissance because he was living a life of intellectual detachment in a centre of culture. He judged Luther as an intellect and not as a social and political force. It never occurred to him that anyone cd. take Luther's ideas seriously , and he failed to see the liaison between ideas and the collection of (Papal) taxes. Hence , after some interval , the Thirty Years War and the very great waste of Leibniz' time trying to effect reconciliations.

In conclusion:

It ought to be obvious that the method wd. not only save a great deal of time to the student in giving some sort of form to his study , but it wd. save the time of the Senate. They wd. not in 1930 be removing or trying to remove rubbish from the mind of Smoot that had been removed from the realm of human enlightenment before the year 1700.

In his search for a science of history Henry Adams , I think , erred in that he started gunning about for an analogy outside history : i.e. , in astronomy, before he had exhausted the study of relations inside his subject (history) itself.

EZRA POUND

BOOK REVIEWS

A DISTINGUISHED POET

THE BRIDGE, *a Poem, by Hart Crane. Limited edition. Paris: The Black Sun Press.* 96 *pages.* $10.

The variety of form and style that Mr. Crane successfully employs in this work testifies to his technical proficiency, and the richness of his poetic texture proves him to be endowed with gifts of the highest order. *The Bridge* is his second volume, and it more than fulfills the expectations aroused by the appearance of his first, *White Buildings,* in 1926. It is a collection of fifteen poems grouped in eight sections and tied together by a single theme. The subject of the poem derives from Brooklyn Bridge, which is at once fact, metaphor, and symbol; it quickly expands into a vision of an heroic American past and a divination of our spiritual future. Beyond this the theme is difficult to describe.

This difficulty appears at a glance to be the best proof of the poet's complete success: he everywhere transforms the subject into something rich and strange. The poem as a whole says vastly more than any literal paraphrase of it could possibly convey, if such a paraphrase could be written; for its logical meaning has an elusiveness that is singularly incompatible with the emotional intention, which is simple, and can be reduced to a phrase like "the grandeur of America" or "the magnificent future of America." Crane himself seems to have felt the discrepancy, for, following Coleridge, he has given us a marginal commentary on about half of the poem. This gloss, however, is obscure (though beautifully written), and it does not quite succeed with what I take its intention to be — to simplify the thread of the historical and symbolic continuity, by which the reader may proceed into the enormously complicated style.

The fifteen poems, taken as one poem, suffer from the lack of a coherent plot, whether symbolic or narrative: the coherence of the

work consists in the personal quality of the writing — in mood, feeling, and tone. In the line by line texture Mr. Crane has perfect mastery over the quality of his style; but it lacks an objective pattern of ideas elaborate enough to carry it through an epic or heroic work. The single symbolic image, round which the whole poem centers, is at one moment the actual Brooklyn Bridge; at another, it is any bridge or "connection"; at still another, it is a philosophical pun and becomes the basis of a series of analogies. In "Cape Hatteras," for example, the aeroplane and Walt Whitman are related "bridges" to some transcendental truth. The poet has not observed the distinction between a metaphor and a philosophical idea.

Because the idea is variously metaphor, symbol, and analogy, it tends to make the poem static. The poet takes it up, only to be forced to put it down again *when the poetic image of the moment is exhausted.* The idea does not, in short, fill the poet's mind; it is the starting point for a series of magnificent short flights, of beautiful inventions connected only in analogy — which explains the merely personal passages, which are obscure, and the lapses into sentimentality. The idea is not sufficiently objective and articulate in itself; it lags after the poet's vision; it appears and disappears; and in the intervals Crane improvises, often beautifully, is in the flight of the aeroplane, sometimes badly, as in the discourse on Whitman in the same poem.

In the great epic and philosophical works of our tradition, notably the Divine Comedy, the intellectual groundwork is not only simple philosophically; we not only know that the subject is personal salvation, just as we know that Mr. Crane's is the grandeur of America: we are given the complete articulation of the idea down to the slightest detail, and we are given it objectively apart from anything the poet is going to say about it. When the poet extends his perception, there is a further extension of the groundwork ready to meet it and discipline it, and to compel the invention of the poet to stick to the subject. It is a game of chess; neither side can move without consulting the other. Crane's difficulty is that of modern poets generally; they play the game with half of the men, the men of sensibility, and because they can make any move, the significance of all moves is obscure.

If we subtract from Crane's idea what he has to say about it, we have left only the static abstraction, "the grandeur of America," which

is not only incapable of further elucidation on the logical plane, but actually obstructs it.

The theme of *The Bridge* is, in fact, an emotional over-simplification of a subject-matter that Crane did not, on the plane of narrative and fact, simplify at all. The poem is emotionally homogeneous and simple — it contains a single purpose; but because it is logically unclarified it is emotionally confused. America stands for a passage into new truths. Is this the meaning of American History? The poet has every right to answer yes, and this he has done. But just what in America or about America stands for this? Which American history? The historical plot of the poem, which is the groundwork on which the symbolic bridge stands, is arbitrary and broken, where the poet would have gained an overwhelming advantage by choosing a single period or episode, a concrete event with all its dramatic causes, and by following it up minutely, and being bound to it. In short, he would have gained an advantage could he have found a subject to stick to.

Does American culture afford such a subject? It probably does not. After the seventeenth century the sophisticated history of the scholars came into fashion; our popular, legendary chronicles come down only from the remoter European past. It is a sound impulse on Crane's part to look for an American myth, some simple version of our past that lies near the center of the American consciousness; an heroic tale with just enough symbolic morality to give his mind freedom and play. The soundness of his impulse is witnessed also by the kind of history in his poem: it is inaccurate, and it will not at all satisfy the sticklers for historical fact: it is the history of the motion picture, of the most naïve patriotism. This is sound; for it ignores the scientific ideal of truth-in-itself, and looks to a cultural truth which might win the spontaneous allegiance of the mass. It is on such simple integers of truth, not truth of fact but of religious necessity, that men unite. The American mind was formed on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which broke down the European truths and gave us a temper deeply hostile to the making of new religious truths of our own.

The impulse in *The Bridge* is religious, but the soundness of an impulse is no warrant that it will create a sound art form, which depends on too many factors beyond the control of the poet. The age is scientific and pseudo-scientific, and our philosophy is corrupt. And it is possibly this circumstance that has driven the religious attitude into

a corner where it lacks the right instruments for its defense and growth, and where it is in a vast muddle about just what these instruments are. Perhaps this corruption of the intellect is responsible for Crane's unphilosophical belief that the poet, unaided and isolated from the people, can create a myth. If anthropology has destroyed the credibility of myths, it has shown us how they rise: their growth is mysterious from the people as a whole; and it is probable that no one man ever put myth into history. It is still a nice problem among higher critics, whether the authors of the Gospels were deliberate myth makers, or whether their minds were simply constructed that way; but the evidence favors the latter. Mr. Crane is a myth maker, and in an age favorable to myths he would have written a mythical poem in the act of writing an historical one.

For, American history being vast and disordered, and as various as American citizens (my own conception of it is radically different from Mr. Crane's), there was no settled version for the poet to draw upon and intensify. The episodes of *The Bridge* follow out of no inherent necessity in the theme, for they are arbitrary, and appear not organically but analogously. The form is static; each section is a new start, and but for the broken chronology the poem constantly begins over again.

It is difficult to agree with those critics who find the work a single poem and as such an artistic success. It is a collection of lyrics, the best of which are not surpassed by anything in American literature. The writing is most distinguished when Crane is least philosophical, *when he writes from sensation.* "The River" is a masterpiece of order and style; it alone is enough to place Crane in the first rank of American poets living or dead. Equally good but less ambitious are the "Proem: To Brooklyn Bridge," and "Harbor Dawn," and "The Dance" from the section called "Powhatan's Daughter."

These poems bear only the loosest sort of relation to the symbolic demands of the theme; they merely fit into the loose historical pattern or extend the slender structure of analogy running through the poem. They are primarily lyrical, and each has its complete form; it stands alone. The poem "Indiana," written presumably to complete the pattern of "Powhatan's Daughter," does not stand alone, and it is one of the most astonishing performances ever made by a poet of Crane's genius. "The Dance" gives us the American background for the com-

ing white man, and "Indiana" carries the stream of history to the pioneer West. It is a nightmare of sentimentality and false writing: Crane is at his most philosophical in a theme in which he feels no poetic interest whatever.

The breakdown of the poem as an historical epic and the great distinction of the individual poems define, I believe, the range of Crane's poetry. It is lyrical. When he philosophizes explicitly in his verse, the doctrine is a sentimental muddle of Walt Whitman and the pseudo-primitivism of Sherwood Anderson and Dr. W. C. Williams, raised to a vague and transcendental reality. The impulse of the poem is, as I have said, religious, but in its lack of any religious structure it does not rise to a religious and tragic vision. Crane's vision is that of the naturalistic, romantic poet, and it vacillates between two poles. A buoyant optimism of the Whitman school and the direst Baudelairean pessimism exist side by side, unfused. The effect of that section of the poem intended as an Inferno, "The Tunnel," is largely nullified by the anti-climactic lapses into an infernal vision in the midst of panegyric. Crane's talent is romantic and mixed, and it does not survive the requirements of an extended objective pattern.

In this there is a similarity to the impulse of *Une Saison d'Enfer;* but there is a difference which is fundamental. Rimbaud achieved the mixed and disorganized surface of the poem by means of a process of deliberate dissociation. Crane begins with dissociation and tries to organize his pattern. In the case of Rimbaud there is a powerful intellectual drama resulting from his struggle against the intellectual order that he inherited; but Crane, at the end of the romantic movement, when the dissociation is all accomplished, struggles with the problem of finding an intellectual order. It is the romantic process reversed, and the next stage in the process is not romanticism at all.

Yet the very mixture of Crane's vision, when it stays on the lyrical plane, surcharges his verse with an inimitable richness of rhythm and style, and suffuses over it an untranslatable quality of immense poetic interest. In "The River" and "Harbor Dawn" he writes out of sensibility, and here his "philosophy" is an implicit pantheism which is harmless and without moral value, good or bad: it has no necessary consequence in any conceivable action. But, in the interpretation of American life implied in "The Bridge," there is the current apotheosis of the emotional will in its drive to mastery over mere quantities:

truth is magnitude glimpsed on a remote plane. In his passive receptiveness — which is very different from a sound "wise passiveness" which Mr. Babbitt has misrepresented to the modern mind — and in his rejection of a rational and qualitative will, Crane follows the main stream of romanticism in the last hundred years. Starting with Poe, it came through Baudelaire and Rimbaud to American and English poets of the last generation. If this impulse is dying out, it is as fortunate for its reputation as it is remarkable, that it should be represented at the end by a poetry so rich, finely wrought, and powerful as Hart Crane's.

ALLEN TATE

THORNTON WILDER

THE WOMAN OF ANDROS. *By Thornton Wilder. New York. Albert & Charles Boni.* 1930. $2.50.

Mr. Wilder deals with the "notation of the heart," but he is a literary man for all that. The inspiration behind his three pieces of fiction, and the course of their writing as we have it, does not result so much from direct notation as it does from other literature and from certain general notions which predicate rather than control experience. He is the kind of writer in whom the comment is more important than the thing presented for comment; and his comment itself is of that kind which illuminates the reader more than it does the subject. Poverty and riches are in this method. There is poverty of growing character and there is riches in static characterization. There is riches in textural excellence, poverty in vascular structure. If we ignore what Mr. Wilder does not provide we may be satisfied with the perfection which he exhibits. Some will go further and be deceived, and consider his sermons on the Christian soul to be novels of the thinking heart.

And with this, his last book, deception is rendered easier by the great improvement his style has undergone. *The Cabala* was what is called brilliant writing; it was stocked with wise-cracks, and its extraneity was its essence. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* was less obviously brilliant, less extraneous to itself in its minute particulars, and its wise-cracks were more often honest epigrams. Both these books were written in segments, and were held together in their guise as novels by the loose concepts suggested in their titles and by the considerations introduced in their opening and closing chapters. Their form, their body, was nothing of which Henry James could have approved. Their subject matter might be described in the *Poetics* but could not be found in the books themselves. In *The Woman of Andros* there is more of a proper theme—the presentation of a certain limit of consciousness—a limit between the boundaries of doubt and faith; and that theme is pretty consistently given the colour of dramatic continuity. The impedimenta of brilliance and epigram have almost dis-

appeared, and we are given instead certain beautiful sayings, sayings which have at their best an air of being distinguished poetic proverbs. Comment generally is simpler, more intensified. The narrative is naturally more convincing, the persons more vivid, the idiom of conversation denser than in the earlier books. A hurried reading, such as the brevity of the book and its spread typography suggest, gives the impression of a sound and beautiful novel.

A second reading reverses the sense of the impression, while somehow keeping its strength. The book remains interesting, and it remains beautiful writing. But it no longer seems to be much of a novel. Although the persons in the book—Chrysis and her sister, and Pamphilus and his father—retain their individuality and what is more important preserve the integrity of their feelings, the book itself is not integral, not individual. It appears to depend for the validity of its final impression upon something not properly part of the book at all, upon something part of the author's mind which has not been digested into the book. There was an ulterior motive in Mr. Wilder's mind which he was not able to merge with the motives of his characters. It is such a motive as the motive of parable, almost that of allegory — either, in its own domain, most proper, but neither fitting the denouement of a tragedy, for in tragedy nothing materially relevant may be left abstract from the lives of the characters.

The nature of Mr. Wilder's failure may be indicated in two ways — by reference to his literary method, and by mention of his prevailing religious preoccupation in relation to his novels.

It does not matter much how loosely or closely Mr. Wilder follows the *Andria* of Terence or the letters of Madame de Sevigné. It does matter a great deal whether what he borrows becomes his own, or whether, on the contrary, it sets up a conflict with what he has in mind. In *The Woman of Andros* (and similarly in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*) there is a conflict; he has borrowed too much to suit his own purposes: there are outcroppings of the sources which interfere with the story being told. Admittedly, this sort of criticism cannot be proved; it can only be felt that some other context would have been better suited to the development of Mr. Wilder's intention. But there is another matter, on much the same level as the use of purely literary sources, and that is the problem of Mr. Wilder's borrowings from himself. Examination of such should penetrate the marrow of

his style. On page eighty-four of *The Woman of Andros* begins the following passage:

It astonished her to find someone laconic in a chattering world and with quiet hands in a gesturing civilization. He was blackened and cured by all weathers. He stood in the squares of the various ports of call, his feet apart as though they were forever planted on a shifting deck. He seemed to be too large for daily life; his very eyes were strange — unaccustomed to the shorter range, too used to seizing the appearances of a constellation between a cloud and a cloud, and the outlines of a headland in rain. . . . He was passing the time and filling the hours in anticipation of release from a life that had lost its savor with the death of his daughter.

In *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, there are some sentences which begin on page 128:

He was blackened and cured by all weathers. He stood in the Square with feet apart as though they were planted on a shifting deck. His eyes were strange, unaccustomed to the shorter range, too used to seizing the appearances of a constellation between a cloud and a cloud, and the outlines of a cape in rain. His reticence was sufficiently explained for most of us by his voyages.

There follows a letter dealing with the death of this man's daughter, ending, "You will laugh at me, but I think he goes about the hemispheres to pass the time between now and his old age."

It is common to castigate writers as much for this kind of pillage as any other, except when the earlier work has been discarded and the resurrection represents a saving. But it may be in Mr. Wilder's case such a castigation would be an injustice. His repetition is merely a natural event in his literary method. It indicates the quality, extent, and value of his inspiration; and it shows us pretty well how he apprehends experience. He is content to reproduce, with an increment of elegance, an old gesture, when his real business lay in the creation of character; and we may take it that he was not only content but positively willing — so sure was he of its effect. Suppose, even, the gesture to be as effective in one instance as in another (which it ought not to be), there remains the question of the value of this kind of gesture in any circumstance. It sounds well, it has a good rhythm, it arouses a sympathetic set of vague feelings and responses: it gives the mind something easy to play with. But it does nowhere near the work of the opening sentences, for example, of *Lord Jim*.

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull. Etc.

It is not suggested that Mr. Wilder should write in the style of Conrad; comparison has been introduced instead of argument merely to show how essentially vague, how conventional, is this important aspect of Mr. Wilder's writing. He does not locate himself, or his people, physically. He is engaged in the business of setting up states of mind, not in establishing experience. Having himself had the experience, he takes it as granted that the reader will be satisfied without it. . . . The point is, that it may be fairly stated that all the important images in *The Woman of Andros* are of this general character. The book is not written; it is written about, and it is very true to say that the reader will find in it only what he brings to it — a circumstance which may very well be true of all "literary" books.

The other reason for Mr. Wilder's failure to write a wholly successful novel—namely, the relation of his religious preoccupation to the body of his novel—has been discussed by Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic* for March 26, 1930. In brief, the point is that Mr. Wilder repeats at the end of his book certain sentences with which he began it, to the effect that Christianity was imminent but not yet. On a second reading it becomes increasingly clear that the life and death of Chrysis the hetaira and of her sister Glycerium were the best and noblest that could be had without knowledge of Christian love and salvation. Such judgment, from the point of view of the novel, is obviously *ex post facto*, and cannot directly concern the characters in the book. It is much as if Mr. Wilder should ask us to judge the tragedies of Aeschylus in the light of Christian piety, or the tragedy of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* with relation to the polity of Confucius. Yet Mr. Wilder has so written his book that it is impossible to understand many of its passages and certainly impossible to seize its total significance without some such judgment. It is not that Mr. Wilder's Christian bias is to be complained of, but that he has inserted into the book something so real in itself that it cannot be ignored, and yet such that it cannot be real in terms of the book. The result is that he has thinned the book just where he intended to strengthen it — in its central meaning.

R. P. Blackmur

HORSES AND CHARIOTEER

THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY. *By Robert Bridges. New York. Oxford University Press.* 1930. $3.50.

It is pleasant to praise the wisdom of our elders; it is proper to speak of the virtues of the dead. And when, almost as his dying words, the late Poet Laureate has bequeathed to us a long and serious poem which contains his affirmation of the philosophy and faith which have animated his life, it behooves us to approach that poem with sober respect. This is not the place to assess Dr. Bridges' final reputation as a poet. It is enough to mark the fact that his death, even more definitely than Hardy's, shows us the passing of an epoch. There was always a personal element in Hardy's poems that separated them from the time in which he lived. Dr. Bridges' work was perhaps in the fuller tide of the nineteenth-century spirit; certainly as the more intellectual poet of the two, using more freely certain characteristic abstractions, he exhibits in a more articulate fashion the doctrines by which our fathers lived. It is our task to examine some of these doctrines; if we are led to respectful disagreement, the dead poet, one feels, in his great honesty would have wished that disagreement expressed and would not have cared for a superficial use of the maxim: "*Nil nisi bonum.*"

The Testament of Beauty is founded on the four great cornerstones of nineteenth-century poetry: wonder, beauty, love, and science. The poem is permeated both on its surface and in its heart with the feelings, ideas, and facts that have emanated from the laboratory for so many decades. One sees the poet taking theories from biology and physics and manipulating them, expending his talent and mastery over words on these lifeless shapes and converting them into myths for our use. Even radio is assimilated, finely, to the stuff of poetry. With this occupation the poet has imbibed the faith of scientists. In one of his early works he has shown us Prometheus talking with the voice of Thomas Huxley; now in his aristocratic distrust of the mob, he says:

> Well might we ask what Beauty ever coud liv or thrive
> in our crowded democracy under governance
> of such politic fancy as a farmer would show
> who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest:

> and yet hath modern cultur enrich'd a wasting soil;
> Science comforting man's animal poverty
> and lessening his toil, hath humanized manners
> and social temper.

We recognize a faith that is not ours.

Together with this devotion to a new Messiah is an absorption in its parent, the emotion of wonder. Wonder is "Man's generic mark"; we remember a somewhat different saying from Aristotle. At times this absorption manifests itself in praise of scientific curiosity; more frequently its object is the flower in a crannied wall that we have known in Wordsworth and Whitman. He says of flowers:

> each type a faultless essence of God's will.

This seeming Platonism is not disturbing, but we have to pause before the poet's simple primitivism. Dr. Bridges has ever been an adherent to what we may term the cult of child-worship. In *Prometheus* he has called the child's mind "happy for still unconscious." In *The Growth of Love* he speaks of the passage to manhood as having

> The one thing lost more worth than all the rest,

that is, the charm of a child. Again, looking back upon childhood he realizes that he

> Once dwelt within the gate that angels guard,
> Where yet I'd be had I but heavenly wings.

It is in a like sense that in the same sonnet sequence he interprets Christ's injunction to become like little children. In *The Testament of Beauty* he repeats his conviction:

> Rafaël once venturing to show God in Man
> gave a child's eyes of wonder to his baby Christ.

And:

> a child is ever our nearest picture of happiness.

This devotion reaches full measure in the passage where he states that a child will perforce imitate the most beautiful things.

If these citations help to indicate that this poem in its exterior aspect is concordant with certain typical manifestations of the nineteenth-century spirit we can pass to an examination of the core of doctrine and find the same spirit dominant. The poet's philosophy is

a pantheism — "The mind is indissociable from what it contemplates." Man's mind cannot be isolated from Nature's other works; independence of will cannot separate him off from impercipient existences. Duty is of the same order as natural law. The "Ring of Reality" which is "the created expression of Universal Mind" recurs frequently in the poem. A typical statement is:

> we see Spiritual, Mental and Animal
> to be gradations merged together in growth and mix'd
> in their gradations, and that the animal pleasure
> runneth thru'out all grades.

The Beauty which is the theme of the poem is indiscriminately, one might say ambiguously, a quality both of the objects of carnal lusts and of divine wisdom. The clearest statement of the poet's conception of Beauty is his equation of the Lucretian Venus with it. Venus, for Lucretius a fertility goddess, was as non-moral a spirit as her prototype, Empedocles' φιλότης. Hence Dr. Bridges, as Santayana points out of Lucretius, could have written with equal truth and aesthetic justification a testament of Mars. Here surely is a culmination of the philosophy which the past century so eagerly built up in so many different forms: Shelley's thin pantheism, Bentham's utilitarianism, Hegel's absolutism, the materialism of the post-Darwinian scientists. It was a century so obsessed with the category of continuity that it craved the comfort of knowing that all was one.

We would be willing, I think, to grant the poet this monism; a great poem, the *De Rerum Natura*, has been established upon such a base, and an interesting philosophy, that of Spinoza, has been close in spirit. One would regret that the poet's philosophy was such that those two great motives of human poetry, effort and struggle, could not enter his poem; still, the way was open to him to give this scientific age what it has needed, another Lucretius. We are first disturbed when we discover words and attitudes in use which are the foundation stones of any dualism and which are meaningless in a monist conception of the world. Such words are duty and will and such an attitude is Dr. Bridges' fine aristocratic disdain of democracy and the common mob. Our disturbance grows when we discover that this *mélange de tout* is producing internal discrepancies and inconsistencies in the poet's thought, and we become seriously alarmed when we

discover that the irreconcilables are to be seemingly reconciled by an appeal to a quasi-religion which, although it adopts a Christian formulation, distressingly resembles the most eccentric vagaries of liberal Protestantism.

We may take as an instance of the confusion in the poet's mind his perversion of Plato's myth of the charioteer and the horses in the *Phaedrus*, which is used as framework for the poem. Instead of two horses, one good and one bad, the two horses of the poem, called Selfhood and Breed, are both good. Selfhood through mother love, which is a projection of self, is the fountain of altruistic sentiments equally with Breed. In fact, it is difficult to distinguish Breed from Selfhood, as the poet must have discovered when he came to write the third book, the one on Breed, which is very largely digression. It is not that Plato's words are sacrosanct — we can applaud the poet's condemnation of Plato's socialist Republic — but that Plato's myth seems to us to be truer. Certainly from Dr. Bridges' account we see no need for a charioteer. Selfhood and Breed, being both responsive to Beauty, will mount, it would seem, of their own nature to God, since, as for Beauty:

> being of eternity it overcometh evil
> as any nativ disposition is apt to do.

In fact it is difficult to see that there is any such thing as evil, and, we note, in an enthusiastic moment the poet has cried:

> to the enamoured soul
> evil is irrelevant.

It may seem to be too much in a lawyer-like spirit to exhibit discrepancies in the poet's teachings, but such an exhibition is valuable, both to strengthen our protest against the poet's chief doctrines and at the same time to indicate where his real virtue lies. He rightly forbids us to distinguish "moralities where never is none," that is, in nature, but he says in one place:

> The wise will live by Faith
> faith in the order of Nature and that her order is good.

And in another place he speaks of the "inhumanity of nature's omnipotence." The will is reduced to the passive state of being the harmony between our instincts and intelligence; yet he recognizes that reason,

the charioteer, can "bedizen the rioting joys that fringe the pathways of Hell" and thereby leaves us without the certainty of salvation he has promised us elsewhere. Speaking of the offspring of Selfhood he says:

> blind motherly attraction is the spring
> of purest affection and of all compassion —
> the emotion most inimical to war.

Even Mr. Bertrand Russell knows better than this, as does the poet when later he blames Selfhood for the Great War:

> Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
> and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness.

One of the strongest notes of the poem is the poet's frequent distrust and scorn for the democratic mob and the humanitarianism which serves it. Yet he can say:

> for surely as mind in man groweth
> so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,
> wider ever and worthier, untill it may contain
> and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love,
> and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth.

One had thought that the reconcilation of *all* wisdom passion and love was exactly the formula of egalitarian democracy.

Yet it would be ungracious to close with disagreement and to leave the impression that this poem was nothing but illogical confusion. There is much to praise. The mere existence of a long and serious poem is matter for gratitude in these overly lyrical days; the continuity of interest, the refusal to lapse into prose command our admiration. The virtues of the trained craftsman are present in great number: his metre is at one and the same time stately and capable of subtlety; his frequent passages of description are filled with a beauty of imagery that can be compared with Shelley and with a richness of diction that reminds one of Keats. The occasional appearance of true wit, notably in the passage about bees, pleasingly complicates the emotional structure of the poem. And if we are obliged to refuse our assent to the poet's important beliefs yet there are many wise things said to which we can heartily agree. The fine breeding and inherent nobility of soul of an aristocrat frequently speak out. He talks to us calmly

and sanely about war; recognizing its horrors and yet deploring unreasoned pacifism. His condemnation of socialism has gravity and force. It is a masculine voice that tell us:

> Pure Hedonism therefore is confuted off-hand
> and its social pretension is but a will-o-the-wisp
> as if the honest pleasure of a wise man coud lie
> in furthering or conniving at the pleasur of them
> who know not ev'n their own unhappiness, nor how
> ere they can win happiness they must learn wisdom
> by paths difficult and to them unpleasurable.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

AN AMERICAN READS BAUDELAIRE

THE CULT OF BEAUTY IN CHARLES BAUDELAIRE. *By S. A. Rhodes, Ph.D. New York. Institute of French Studies, Columbia University.* 1929. 2 Volumes. $3.00.

Dr. Rhodes himself tells us in the introduction to his essay on Baudelaire what he proposes to do. "I have sought," he writes, "to establish a bond between my own perceptions and those of the poet to get at his aesthetic and moral tenets." Dr. Rhodes' essay is very much better than this announcement would lead us to expect. Nowhere in the six hundred pages of the essay do we find such gross distortion of the evidence of Baudelaire's works and words and life as in the earlier apologists; we are not asked to forget that Baudelaire wrote the *Journaux Intimes*, nor to reject as apocryphal the closing verses of the *Crépuscule du Soir*, *Bénediction*, or *L'Imprévu*. Dr. Rhodes is interested in Baudelaire, and not in the confirmation of his own anterior convictions; he does not, in fact, appear to have such convictions; and he has not only studied the whole of the works of Baudelaire, but read conscientiously of the many and disparate critics. What he writes of Baudelaire is, in consequence, less partial, more just, than what Swinburne wrote, or Gautier, or Mr. Symons, or even Proust. Dr. Rhodes' essay is not perhaps adequate; but it is not misleading.

It is not possible to take Dr. Rhodes' essay with complete seriousness. "For as the Bible affirms," we find in the introduction, "and as André Gide reminds us again, to gain his life man must first renounce it." Throughout the essay we continue to meet with such misfortunes:

"Life is a grim struggle," wrote M. Romain Rolland . . . "He (Baudelaire) was no partisan of a wishy-washy, spiritless, artless, easy and fluent expression." "A rose under any other name would still be a rose, and nothing could be added to its usefulness by enfolding it within a bunch of vegetables. . . "

It is with this last passage, disconcertingly enough, that Dr. Rhodes opens his discussion of art and morality.

But there are in the essay parts and whole chapters which may profitably be read. In the chapter on the art of writing Dr. Rhodes gives illuminating evidence of Baudelaire's extreme technical solicitude and exigence, evidence from the letters and internal evidence from the translation of Poe and from the successive versions of many of the poems. In the same chapter there are aptly chosen examples of Baudelaire's use of assonance and rhythm. And in the chapter called "The Loves of a Poet," there is a good account of what we know of his relations with women, and of the gradual transmutation of his attitude towards them. There cannot be much doubt now of what that attitude was; it has been defined so clearly by Baudelaire in the poems themselves, in the *Journaux Intimes*, and in the letters to his mother, to Mme. Sabatier, and Marie X. . . And if Dr. Rhodes does not, with his citations from Nietzsche and Freud, add much to our understanding of this attitude — and it is an attitude which, in Baudelaire, is not simple, and wants understanding — he does give an account of it which is recognizably correct. There are other parts of the essay which are adequate; in general Dr. Rhodes is at his best in the denunciation of the errors of earlier critics; for this seems to induce in his writing a certain specificity and vigor. He is very careful to defend Baudelaire against the charge of plagiarism of Poe; and he is quite right in maintaining that he was not essentially derivative from Hugo, that he was not a sadist nor a Manichean, and that only in a very limited and accidental sense could he be called a decadent. Dr. Rhodes is an eclectic; and the validity of many of his observations neither conditions nor is conditioned by the adequacy of the essay as a whole.

But Baudelaire was not an eclectic; and when we find on reading the essay that however much Dr. Rhodes may know about Baudelaire, what Baudelaire saw he does not know, we are invited by what Dr. Rhodes says in his introduction to ask how his failure may be explained by the disparity between his own perceptions and those of the poet. We must remember at this point that what Dr. Rhodes wants to give us, the doctrine, the "*aesthetic and moral tenets*," of Baudelaire, that this must necessarily be an abstraction from Baudelaire's writings. It is not with this program of abstraction that we would quarrel; but in Dr. Rhodes' abstraction something very essential has

been lost. Baudelaire was not a metaphysician nor a moralist, and he was a critic rather than a student of aesthetics: neither in his poems nor in the *Journaux* and letters are there any general statements of doctrine, statements in which the sense is not essentially conditioned by the reference, the diction, the context. It is only by a scrupulous attention to the specific reference that we may understand the unity of Baudelaire's vision, and be able to recognize this unity in passages apparently so disparate as the phrase about M. Ancelle:

Il aime toujours sa femme et sa fille sans en rougir.

and the lines from *Le Balcon*:

Tu te rappelleras la beauté des caresses,
La douceur du foyer et le charme des soirs, . . .

It is for this reason that we deplore Dr. Rhodes' practise of quoting isolated phrases and verses. Now it would not be easy, but it would be possible, to give an account of the doctrine from which Baudelaire's "philosophy" might be derived; it would be above all a Christian doctrine; there are things in Augustine, in Plotinus, even in Longinus, that might in part serve. Such a doctrine would do more than explain Baudelaire's phrases and verses; it would describe a world in which Baudelaire's sensibility, his tastes, his *hygiène, conduite, morale,* become in the full sense intelligible. We should not undertake too readily to find the doctrinal equivalent of the tense and solemn transition of the last verses of *L'Imprévu, Une Charogne, Delphine et Hyppolyte.* And we feel certain that if Dr. Rhodes had really known what Baudelaire was talking of, he would not so casually have written:

Manifestly art cannot pursue an aim contrary to that of a higher morality, since opposition to the spirit of ugliness and evil is the purpose of both.

All means were just to Baudelaire in his search for loveliness and beauty. That is why he honored Satan, because, though defeated, he still dreams of his greatness.

Dr. Rhodes recognizes in Baudelaire that peculiar tonic quality, that extreme tension, which distinguishes him sharply from the romantics, and of which M. du Bos has written so well. But of the character and implications of this tonus Dr. Rhodes is ignorant; re-

peatedly he confuses it with exaltation, with emotion, or with ecstasy. The extreme tension of Baudelaire's life, which is evoked for us by many of the poems, and most completely by *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*, is not, in my opinion, to be regarded as merely incidental to his perceptions; it is the sign and witness of Baudelaire's negotiation with a real world. It is only as the outcome of this negotiation that the *Fleurs du Mal* are to be understood. When Baudelaire writes:

> Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance
> Comme un divin remède a nos impuretés,
> Et comme la meilleure et la plus pure essence
> Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés.

and Dr. Rhodes adds:

> For sorrow is like a filter through which beauty is purified of its gross materialism, after which it takes on the crystalline radiance of the spirit.

we know that it is not merely by a less fortunate diction that Dr. Rhodes is distinguished from Baudelaire; for there is an irresoluble disparity in the mode and object of the perceptions; and the bond which Dr. Rhodes seeks to establish between them is necessarily of an extreme tenuity. Dr. Rhodes is not tonic; the world, which for Baudelaire was so hard and exigent, has become for him distant and vague. What he has lost in the projection of Baudelaire via his own perceptions is what Baudelaire saw.

We are reminded of Sainte Beuve, and his *pretension touchante de tout comprendre*. Every critic, perhaps, must be wary of such eclecticism; but for the American critic the danger is particularly grave. For few of us, in America, is any world so real or so insistent as Baudelaire's was for him; and if we are to understand his work we may not forget this; for in abstracting from the quality of the poet's conviction, we necessarily corrupt to some extent the sense of what he wrote.

ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

THE RENAISSANCE
A SPIRITUAL COSTUME-HISTORY

A Cultural History of the Modern Age. *By Egon Friedell. Volume I* (1348-1618) *translated from the German by C. F. Atkinson. New York. Alfred A. Knopf.* 1930. $5.00.

More than any other European the German has felt the importance of history. When the theory of evolution was still in its romantic phase, Herder and Hegel dreamed of a history based on imagination; when that theory grew prosaic, Ranke dreamed of a history based on research. During the eighty years which followed it seemed as though the whole learned world had no other object but to see that Ranke's dream came true. In this period knowledge made prodigious strides. The advance was, however, confined to the accumulation of facts and their classification in artificial (and often purely vocational) compartments — to the anatomy of history. Before 1900 the energy of accumulation concentrated chiefly on the anthropological, archaeological, religious, philosophic, architectural, artistic, literary, military, legal, governmental and diplomatic facts. Since 1900 it has spread to economic, social, musical and scientific facts. Were this to go on it might in time be said of history that everything was known and that no one knew anything.

This work corresponds to that in natural history from 1670 to 1750 — a search for quantity and not for quality of knowledge, a postponement of as well as a preparation for understanding. And, just as the first hypotheses of evolution came only after these eighty years of preparation — with Linnaeus and Buffon, just as Harvey came eighty years after Vesalius, so the first physiology of history came only in 1920 — with Spengler. He is premature only in the sense that they were, he is false only in the sense that they were. Who does not remember Dr. Johnson's gibes at Lord Monboddo for seeing men as apes? Yet Monboddo was merely amusing himself with the fantastic

hypothesis of Linnaeus. Ernst Kantorowicz, author of the widely read and widely criticized *Kaiser Friedrich II* (Berlin, 1927), is accused by Albert Brackmann, more than twenty years his senior, of subscribing to the dangerous doctrine that the historian must use his creative imagination (Historische Zeitschrift 140, 548). This certainly is dangerous, but is there any vigorous doctrine which is not? The Soviets think religion dangerous, others fear sex; some fear romanticism, others logic. Many fear truth, because it is life — and life is dangerous. Kantorowicz answers Brackmann, clumsily, as Monboddo might have answered Johnson; then he says a very interesting thing: that the issues raised "contain what are today [1930] perhaps the chief problems agitating the German intelligentia" (Hist. Zeit. 141, 457-8). So historical day-dreams are again in fashion! May the Lord be praised.

After four years of war these younger Germans — Friedell was forty, Spengler thirty-eight and Kantorowicz only twenty-six when the armistice was signed — had almost learned not to fear death. Why then should they fear life? Today when they see a thing marked DANGEROUS, they laugh.

They do not want the skin and bones of history, they do not want knowledge for its own sake any more than did Augustine or Bach. Their grievance against orthodox scholarship is that it is always cautioning — 'wait, careful; ah yes, but not yet.' (See Brackmann Hist. Zeit. 140, 534.) As if accuracy were itself an end. They wish to know the things they need to know inaccurately rather than not at all; they will not postpone their baptism till the Day of Judgment. Ernst von Kahler says he is particularly seeking to distinguish between "what is, and what is not, worth knowing." (*Der Beruf der Wissenschaft*, 29.) And as a sample of orthodox daring Friedell cites the title of a work by a Dr. Jorgen Tesman, "State Research Scholar in Cultural History": *The Domestic Industries of Brabant in the Middle Ages* (42).

To them history is, except for the ephemeral present, all man's reality. The need to understand this reality does not create a 'field of concentration' but an emergency. If history dealt tangibly with reality as does war and medicine so great a discrepancy could not exist. The soldier and doctor must prepare to face not only distant contingencies but immediate crises. They have a faith, but not a blind faith, in re-

search, for they know that their science is at bottom an effort to make reality foolproof, and, where the raw material is man, they know how little so far it has made foolproof.

But if there is the Scylla of centrifugal accumulation there is also the Charybdis of centripedal selection: if historical research is arbitrarily directed towards what is thought worth knowing, we are introducing paternalism in a realm of ephemeral values. Brackmann is right — this sort of thing is dangerous. But can we afford to eschew all discrimination merely because times change? Of what we shall never live to see the unborn can tell us nothing, but of what we may live to see the young can tell us much.

An Austrian, apparently at one time a philologist, more lately an actor, member of the circle once presided over by the poet Peter Altenberg, Egon Friedell, author of the book before us, is evidently not an intellectual like his professed Saxon masters, Nietzsche and Spengler, but a lover and entertainer of men, more careful of sensation than of explanation. His purpose, he says, is "to sketch a series of intellectual and moral pictures, a spiritual costume-history, of the last six centuries, and, at the same time, to show the Platonic Idea of each age which inwardly moved its thought and was its soul" (24). The first two volumes were published in 1928 and the last is promised shortly, but we shall deal here only with the first — from 1348-1618 — according to the very recent English translation.

Intimidated by science, the orthodox school has tended more and more to believe that the causes of things are material and concrete. Encouraged by his dislike of this school, and by his love of art, Friedell assures us that, on the contrary, the causes of things are spiritual and abstract (20 and 26-27). In both cases it is a matter of temperament, for neither has honestly tried to prove his case by a free admission of evidence and a wise weighing and sifting. Friedell's belief — that the articulation of a Platonic Idea conceived in the brain of a man of genius is the *primum mobile* — is as likely a hypothesis as the other; but we may doubt whether he has reached this belief by strictly scientific methods. For we catch him saying that human evolution was due to man's "very inadequate physical weapons; which led him to create for himself the weapon of reason" (64); whereas he should, to be consistent, have insisted that it was the ape man's cunning which led to the atrophy of his physical weapons.

Apparently, however, this is only a slip of the pen, because the ignominy of being moulded by a physical cause is not visited on any of the ape man's children. Henceforth the Platonic Idea in the mind of a genius is the unchallenged mistress of human destiny. The process is somewhat after this fashion: the Ideas of an earlier age irritate the minds of the young geniuses; as they grow up they articulate their feelings, and their less talented contemporaries — and also all nature apparently — succumb to the new revelation. For instance, "women become . . . broad-hipped and full-bosomed because Rubens at his lonely easel so willed it" (26); and "the new age — modernity — came first, and it was through it that the Plague [of 1348] happened" (81). Thus, on the same principle, classical literature and art were rediscovered because of man's rediscovered admiration for himself (177); thus a liking for the sensuous world caused scientific invention and the rise of capitalism (98 and 95); thus the age of discovery was the effect of the realization that travel was, after all, a pleasure (213). This is the talk of an intelligent man who is drunk: it is half true and half nonsense. One might quite as well read Einstein and then conclude that Rubens caused the Black Plague. As for travel, it probably had become pleasanter, but surely this was partly due to tabular lists of compass deviations, to the blocking of the Oriental trade-routes, to the early fourteenth-century discovery (communicated by Marco Polo to Peter of Abano) that the equatorial zone was thickly inhabited, and to other material and concrete causes. Man's liking for himself and for the sensuous world, on the other hand, may well have been the causes he claims they were.

It is hard not to be impatient with such a clutter as this: Friedell is here neither sound nor inspired, but only garrulous. He would hardly try to prove that the egg is always, and the hen never, a cause; yet what else is he doing here but, like a small boy, answering the orthodox affirmation of 'hen, hen, hen,' with an equally silly 'egg, egg, egg'?

It is only as Friedell gets clear of his own Platonic Ideas and begins to tell his story that he shows his mettle. After an over-elaborate, 'scientific' analysis of the fourteenth-century "traumatic neurosis" — a kind of shell shock — of which the Black Plague was merely a symptom, he develops the idea that Occam's nominalism — which alleges the reality of the concrete particular — was the true cause of

incipient modernity, "the most weighty fact in modern history" (89). He cites as some of its effects the *realpolitik* of the Hapsburgs (131 and 157), the rise of the merchants, craftsmen and condottieri (96-98 and 157), and the realism of the literature which did not spare knighthood and chivalric love (99-100 and 156). This is all well enough, and needed resaying, but he does not explain why this age was also that of the great German and English mysticism, and he fails to add the empiricism in science and economics (of Occam, Oresme and many more), the Post-Glossators who refused to worship Roman Law, or (though he mentions it on page 118) Wyclif's doctrine of the Eucharist. Intellectually he is too relaxed.

Much later, and apropos of nothing in particular, Friedell says, very neatly, that "post-Christian humanity has one vast superiority over the man of antiquity — it has a bad conscience" (272). Such a statement, to introduce the late fourth-century Roman, would have been magnificent; and it would have been hardly less effective had he had the wit to observe that it was the loss of that bad conscience which caused the Renaissance. Never was virtue more cherished than by the early humanists, but it was a new virtue, one found only in classical texts, where it was wedded to self-respect and a life of honor in the lay world. That honesty is the best policy is a worldly maxim, which Rome knew, and which Bruni and Poggio echoed.

Friedell is anything but wary: he dodges the nineteenth-century view that witchcraft was a revival of pagan superstition only to be trapped by the twentieth-century obsession with sex repression (285). All the old texts called witchcraft Devil worship. Why should we be so sure they were wrong? At least the age was still Christian enough. And possibly it is something more than a coincidence that it arose in the early fifteenth century, with man's rising self-respect. To Dante as to Augustine, as we know, the depravity of man was ample to account for all the evil in the world — the evil man did not cause directly he caused indirectly by calling down God's wrath. The Renaissance denied man's depravity and so the severity of God's chastisement, but evil it could not deny; the lion's share of the responsibility for evil was therefore laid at the Devil's door. If not in Luther — who clung to Augustine — at least in Loyola and in the legend of Faust, the Devil not only reaps the fruits of human malice, he instigates it. Playing cunningly to his victim's weakness, he traps him. The Jesuit

Order was formed to combat not man's, but the Devil's, malice. That is why it seemed so fair to be unfair. A pact with the Devil brought earthly blessings, and earthly blessings, like Friedell's travel, were a pleasure now. And this same belief which produced the witch renewed the Inquisition. In the early Middle Ages God's tool had been the Devil, to punish the evil in man; now His tool was man, to counteract the evil of the Devil.

Speaking of Italian Renaissance art Friedell characteristically grazes, but just misses, the point: he says that it "was in part called into being by scientific discussion" (182), but he does not say, as he so properly might, that its meticulous imitation of nature was the culminating preliminary phase which was about to usher in strictly scientific observation. Leonardo is the key to this phase. In him first were the inventor and the painter combined to form the modern man of science.

The next period — of the earlier sixteenth century — is well characterized: in the Platonic Idea of Ariosto, Michelangelo and Guilio Romano, and in the costume of their day, man saw himself a giant — massive and grandiose. Venus and Apollo were eclipsed by Juno and Jupiter (178 and 345). And this in turn raised the very acute problem of how these newly found natural resources of man might be capitalized and exploited: utilitarianism and opportunism were now directed towards the outer, temporal world. As Alberti had analyzed the family, so Castiglione analyzed society and Machiavelli the state, each in his own way raising the problem of how men should behave towards each other (248 and 272). And Friedell well shows how anxious Luther was to make Christianity more efficient and useful (248). Man's behavior towards nature was also seen from a new angle: if it were his destiny to enslave and harness nature to serve his ends, which was both good pagan and good Christian teleology, he must study how nature was made and how she functioned. By some such process modern empirical science was born, and that empiricism, applied to religion, led also to the Protestant return to the sources of revelation, and to the Catholic return — at the Council of Trent — to the sources of authority. Like the Jesuits, like Calvin, Saint Teresa found that experience, rather than logic or tradition, furnished the soundest gloss to the sacred texts.

It was only when man made bold to mould nature to his will that

he fully realized her power. In 1540 came the apotheosis of man's capacity (200) — Rabelais and Loyola share the illusion; in 1580 came the apotheosis of nature's capacity and a renewed realization of man's impotence. As nature waxed, God and the Devil, to the extent that they could not identify themselves with nature, waned. This was a further incentive to empirical science: as nature rose the artificial frame of antiquity fell: Aristotle swayed and crashed (329-39), Roman law, after Cujas (1572), was made the humble servant of custom, the Latin language gave way before the vernaculars, the relativity of values — of morals, of laws, of ideas — were ever recurring themes.

Then came the third phase — and the last of this volume: in 1540 nature was a submissive tool, in 1580 a voluptuous mistress, in 1615 she became a wild and often brutal enemy. The disillusion was gradual. It began with the cosy scepticism of Montaigne and the religious neutrality of William of Orange, Elizabeth and Henry IV (318); it continued with the uneasy reconciliation to paradox by Bellarmin and Giordano Bruno (319); and it culminated in Shakespere's dramatization of life's inexplicability, in Caravaggio's wild chiaroscuros (346), and in Europe's adoption of the gloomy costume of Spain (314). Montaigne and *Hamlet* illustrate two successive phases of helplessness in the face of reality: Montaigne cannot act because he knows too little; Hamlet cannot act because he knows too much (344).

It was just at this moment that the Copernican theory, conceived some eighty years earlier, began to win recognition. Friedell says "it is one of the greatest falsifications of history to harp again and again on the idea that the heliocentric system made man more modest and humble, for the contrary is the truth" (212). The personal hypothesis of Copernicus, born in 1473, probably was, as Friedell intimates, a product of Renaissance daring, but he forgets that it began to carry conviction only in these disillusioned days of Bruno and Galileo.

If we cared, like Friedell, to be very clever and inaccurate we might say that in place of the theoretical utilitarianism of 1540 there was now concrete abstraction. In place of Don Quixote himself appeared Cervantes' picture of him. The turn of the century witnessed a tremendous advance in mathematics, physics and astronomy — the three most metaphysical sciences. It was no longer mercenary or even

utilitarian work: nature no longer merely offered a convenient tool, but a new metaphysics. The only inventions of this very scientific age were the telescope and microscope — in order that man might see and so know nature the better. Friedell says that Francis Bacon thought "new discoveries . . . the less valuable the more they lead to mere profit instead of to the illumination of nature" (334).

In this summary I have tried to make Friedell's account consecutive and sensible. To do this it has been necessary to detach one statement here, another there, to arrange these in some sort of order and patch the holes then still remaining with such of my own views as were most sympathetic with his. I have tried to corroborate as well as to correct. The only methodical part of the book is an alphabetical index of proper names — why he chose to make it alphabetical I cannot say. Like so many books of our day it is more brilliant than comprehensible, more careless than original. These sins are venial; but they are not the only ones — there is another sin which is not. Over the whole book hangs a curse — the curse of pride: Friedell will not break his bread with ordinary men. Because professional historians are a class, and so their work for the most part ordinary work done by ordinary minds, what they do is therefore wrong, what they think is false. Because they take infinite pains, struggle to be impartial, and check or repress their intuitions, he carefully avoids mastering his subject (15-16 and 37), analyzing his prejudices, running down the clues his intuition suggests. He condemns science (22 and 321) and lauds art (21), in his ire forgetting that the historical mind is as distinguishable from the one as from the other. Some of the qualifications of an historian he has: a vigorous and versatile curiosity, good psychological intuitions, a sense that there are values, a love of theories and causes. But many other qualifications he lacks: deep respect for facts, a delight in lucid, cold-blooded demonstration, hatred of intellectual pride and prejudice, and, above all, sensitiveness to geography and chronology. Without these last, history is like romance without sex, science without a laboratory. In geography his interest is spasmodic: he treats fifteenth-century Italy in a special chapter, he sees Luther as a product of the Latin world's periphery (244), he distinguishes the Latin from the Teutonic genius (169), he hates the Spaniard (217 and 223), he differentiates the English from the continental country house (316 and 324); but his unit is more usually the whole of western Europe.

By simplifying the process he confuses the result. His carelessness of chronology is worse: he cites the mentality of Frederick II who died in 1250, and the story of *Meier Helmbrecht*, written in about 1252, to illustrate the sudden change after 1348 (92-93); he cites the age-long preoccupation with Antichrist as another symptom of this new state of mind (111); he cites Alberti, born in 1404, to show the change after 1500 (176); he speaks of Plateresque architecture, whose peak was in 1530, as the effect of Philip II's accession in 1555 (313); and he says that the gold-fever caused by the influx from America in turn caused "new sources of the noble metals" to be discovered "and brought under exploitation by improved mining technique" (224). Yet we know that this improved technique dates from the year 1475, and that the increase in production resulting had already raised prices two hundred per cent by 1550 — the first year when American gold began to be imported in quantity.

How can one man, in one book, say so many wise and so many foolish things? Evidently because it amuses him. To the wary and over-fed professional — who won't read the book — I highly recommend it; to the guileless and hungry amateur — who will read it — I cannot recommend it at all. Like a temptation of the Devil it can do good only to those equipped to parry and resist.

E. M. Pickman

HUMANISM

HUMANISM AND AMERICA. *Edited by Norman Foerster. New York. Farrar & Rinehart.* 1929. $3.50.
THE CRITIQUE OF HUMANISM. *Edited by C. Hartley Grattan. New York. Brewer & Warren.* 1930. $3.50.

The controversy over Humanism, as it now stands, is summed up in two volumes, *Humanism and America* and *The Critique of Humanism*. The dust-cover of the first carries the following battle-cry: "THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURE TO THE ANARCHY OF OUR TIMES!" and the *Critique* proclaims itself, in large red letters, "THE CHALLENGE OF THE CREATIVE LIFE TO THE SCHOOLMEN OF OUR DAY." In a way it is very exhilarating to find publishers so excited about general ideas; still, one is glad that the writers themselves, with the exception of Mr. Munson of the Humanists and Mr. Rascoe of the Anti-Humanists, are content to leave rhetoric and invective to the columnists and the publicity men. The tone of the discussion, indeed, is remarkably high, though signs of repressed anger are not lacking. It is hard to see the reason for the anger, as the question at issue is ill-defined. It is even difficult to see why Mr. Eliot's essay should be in the Humanist volume, and Mr. Chamberlain's in the Anti-Humanist. Perhaps Mr. Bandler, who has an essay in each volume, provides the clue in a note to his essay in the *Critique of Humanism*:

> As I understand it the discussion is about ideas, not words, personalities, or parties: both groups favor humanism, but differ in their interpretation of it. . . . Since the two volumes are complementary, there is no need to explain a change which does not exist.

Read in this light — i.e., as parts of a symposium on humanism — these two books assume an importance which they would utterly lack if considered separately. For the humanists have nothing to offer here which had not already been sufficiently explained by Professor Babbitt; and the Anti-Humanists, one fears, would have little to say if they did not have the formidable Professor Babbitt to attack. The Humanists are fairly well united behind his doctrine, and their op-

ponents have in common an interest in his ideas, which they have all studied and many of them digested; plus a dissatisfaction with its limitations, most of which are traceable to the fact that he is a Harvard professor. It is significant that of the thirteen critics of Humanism, only two are in universities, while of the fifteen contributors to *Humanism and America*, only three are outside the universities. Most of the Humanists are professors who have done little but apply the master's formulae: most of their opponents are writers outside the academic pale who are trying to utilize Humanism in their struggles with a very unregenerate environment. Most of them profess an interest in Humanism with a small h, while sturdily denouncing the dogma. In many ways they better deserve the title of the second generation of Humanists (whether they like it or not) than the strict professors of the faith assembled behind Professor Babbitt.

I have said that the issue was ill-defined. But the critics of Humanism agree in stressing three departments of human life which their opponents have dealt with incompetently or not at all: love, the fine arts, and contemporary America. It is asserted on all sides that the Humanists are Puritans in disguise: and three of their critics rush valiantly to defend Goethe's right to have love affairs at seventy. The third time one encounters this point, one begins to fear that such an exaggerated sensitiveness betrays a spirit hardly less narrow and doctrinaire than that of Professor Babbitt himself, whose remark that "Anyone who thinks of Goethe's love affairs prolonged into the seventies is scarcely likely to maintain that his *Entsagung* was of a very austere character," was sufficient to raise this storm. The critics have much more tangible evidence on their side when they come to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Humanists as critics of the fine arts. Mr. Henry-Russell Hitchcock has a very good essay on Humanist criticism of painting, sculpture and architecture. Mr. Cowley, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Winters, Mr. Mumford, and almost all of the other Anti-Humanists show how the Humanist preoccupation with ethical problems has blinded them to the beauties of poetry, and even caused them to develop a distorted conception of the place and function of the arts. The present group of professing Humanists have failed to display an even average awareness of beauty. All this is serious enough; but even more fundamental is the unanimous criticism that they are incapable of dealing with their immediate environment. When they treat the

literature of the past they are weak on the esthetic side; when they steal a fleeting glance at contemporary literature they are quite lost. Professor More's celebrated failure to appreciate *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, and *Manhattan Transfer* is cited again and again. In just the same way they fail as critics of contemporary society.

These three limitations of orthodox Humanism, or at least of the orthodox Humanists, go far toward showing us their true place and importance. They are due I believe to the doctrine's academic birth and up-bringing. No one quite succeeds in transcending his environment completely. The literary men who live in New York are likely to be provincial in other respects, partly because they do not have enough of some of the influences that have formed Professors Babbitt and More. As Mr. Eliot ominously remarks toward the end of his essay,

> I believe that at the present time the problem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual are in the end one and the same problem; and the solution of one is the solution of the other.

Having come so far with the critics of the Humanists, there still remains the doctrine itself to discuss; for as I understand Professor Babbitt, he claims to provide one with a set of standards, a method, and a point of view which would be useful in contemporary life, rather than a direct criticism of modern art and life. At this point one is in danger of entering a thick tangle of dialectic in search of an exactness which is impossible in the nature of the case. The most one can hope to do is to sketch a very rough map of the terrain in order to point out the positions of the chief writers.

Professor Babbitt attempts to set up an individualism based upon the ethical will, the *frein vital*, or the power to choose intelligently; a power the possession of which is supposed to set man apart from the rest of nature. Mr. Grattan, summoning Professor Dewey to his aid, rejects this dualism, and with it the whole Humanist doctrine: "This position," he say, meaning Professor Dewey's, "entirely eliminates the possibility of a discontinuity between the human and the natural." Mr. Grattan makes this assertion in the name of science, the authority of which he is concerned to save. By a process of reasoning which I am unable to follow, he persuades himself that while man can be fully

described in scientific terms, he still saves the possibility of values. But when he comes to assigning the exact role of science in the establishment and maintaining of value, he falls back on a pious profession of faith which is surely vaguer than anything Professor Babbitt signs his name to: "The extension of the experimental technic into the human and social realms is bound to be the most fruitful adventure of modern times." The interesting point about Mr. Grattan's essay is his recognition of the need of values at all. In this respect as well as in his interest in science he is close to Mr. Hazlitt. The latter is clearer; he does not pretend to give a very water-tight structure to support his hopes, and he is at least certain that "Physics can never be made into an explanation of the universe." Both of them seem to believe that values may somehow be discovered by scientific methods, much as the "laws" of physics and chemistry are discovered. But the authority of a chemical "law" is only momentary; it is lost the moment a better formulation is found; the real authority which they here invoke is the authority of the scientific method, which depends upon the elimination of human needs and desires as factors.

Mr. Mumford, while not making a very formal profession of faith, also seems to reject the Humanist dualism. Like the two other writers, he asks that the findings and methods of science be treated with more respect, and he wants the human being to be allowed to "expand" as well as refrain. He writes very smoothly, and most of what he says is so true, and so unobtrusively expressed, that one is willing to go along with him very contentedly until brought up short by such a statement as the following: "In our conceptions of Nature and Man and Society and Personality we have now arrived, I think, at a somewhat deeper and richer understanding of the relationships than either the New Mechanism or the New Humanism have any notion of." Ten pages of suave generalities, and behold: a deeper and richer understanding than is to be found in the collected works of Dewey, Beard, Babbitt and More. Mr. Mumford, like Mr. Cowley in a much smaller degree, is too easily satisfied with poetical reflections. Perhaps they are artists rather than thinkers. Perhaps they have somehow inherited the Transcendentalist penchant for abstract wisdom, for if the Humanists may be reproached with holding a doctrine which has yet to prove its usefulness in dealing with the contemporary scene, most of their critics may be reproached with holding no intelligible doctrine

at all. Thus Mr. Cowley — whose well-written essay contains many remarks of real insight — ends on a note of poetic nostalgia: "And what, in turn, has Humanism to do with the scene outside my window: with the jobless men who saunter in the dusk, or the dying village, or the paper mill abandoned across the river — this mill whose owners have gone south where labor is cheap?" Mr. Mumford works up to a prophetic vision of ultimate reconciliation: "In our new bed, Romanticist and Classicist, 'Humanist' and Mechanist, naturalist and idealist will lie down happily together; but they must cast off, before they do so, the soiled and tattered philosophical clothes in which they now parade." This is what I mean by saying that without the Humanists the Anti-Humanists would have nothing to talk about.

Probably the most serious consideration of Humanism is to be found in Mr. Tate's essay, *The Fallacy of Humanism*, which has already been published in nearly the same form in the *Criterion* and *The Hound & Horn*. Mr. Tate agrees with Mr. Eliot's well-known criticism of Humanism, that the ethical will lacks authority without religion. This fundamental point may be approached in a number of ways. One may show, as has so often and so convincingly been done, the actual failure of professing Humanists to deal authoritatively with their own day and time. One may attack the theory of the ethical will, demonstrating that without the authority of revelation or an accepted tradition it is subject to attack like that of Mr. Hazlitt. One may show how the Humanist preoccupation with the individual will blinds them to esthetic considerations and to the historical and cultural background which makes a work of art possible. This is the most important point of all, for the Humanists, if they do anything, must claim to occupy a position so central that the problems of society and the arts may be fully surveyed from it.

The trouble is that in the present society they do not actually occupy such a position: they do not have an organized society with a publicly accepted scale of values behind them. Historically, one is told by those who seem to know, Humanism has always been the result of a long religious discipline. Most of these objections are summed up as follows:

As M Ramon Fernandez has recently said, with Aristotelian tact, Humanism should not pretend to be a "Body of Doctrine"; it is a "resultant situation."

The American Humanists have tried to make the resultant situation its

own background, because they lack the resultant situation itself. Humanism . . . tries to take a short-cut to the resultant situation, and ignores the social difficulty of making or reconstructing an appropriate background. It ignores the philosophical difficulty of imagining what the background should be; it is an effort to imitate by rote the natural product of culture; it is a mechanical formula for the recovery of civilization.

I have not attempted in this brief notice to do more than indicate briefly the main lines taken by the chief contributors to a discussion which is by now familiar to readers of *The Hound & Horn*. Several of the essays are important quite apart from their bearing on Humanism, notably Mr. Hitchcock's and Mr. Winters'. As I remarked above, even if one does not believe that the Humanists have found the answer, one must be grateful to them for starting a discussion of fundamental questions.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

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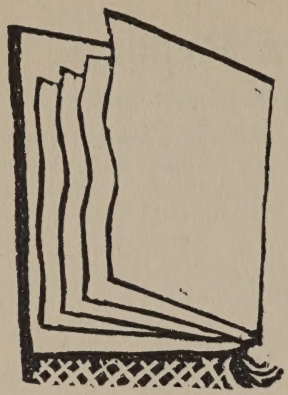

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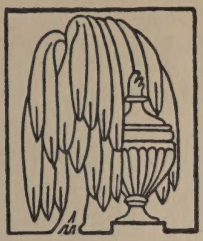

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